A

GOLDEN TREASURY

FOR THE

CHILDREN OF GOD,

WHOSE TREASURE IS IN HEAVEN;

CONSISTING OF

SELECT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

IN PROSE AND VERSE,

FOR EVERY EVENING IN THE YEAR.

VOL. II.

BY C. H. v. BOGATSKY.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE REV. C. F. STEINKOPFF, M. A.

ONE OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY,

LONDON:

Printed by J. HADDON, 12, Tabernacle Walk.

FOR T. WILLIAMS AND SON, STATIONERS' COURT.

1815.

BRIEF

MEMOIRS OF THE AUTHOR.

HAVING been requested by the publishers of the second volume of Bogatzky's Golden Treasury, to add a short account of his life, I gladly comply with their request, as far as it is in my power; and have only to regret, that the scantiness of my materials prevents my entering more fully and minutely into the description of a character, who whilst living, was a bright ornament of the Christian church, and who being dead yet speaketh to thousands through the various edifying writings which he has left behind.

Charles Henry de Bogatzky, a nobleman of Polish extraction, was born towards the close of the seventeenth Century. I am unacquainted with the place of his nativity, the character of his parents, and the manner in which he received his first serious impressions. But of this I am informed, that he was sent to the university of Halle, and studied there about three years (from 1716 to 1718,) attending public lectures on philosophy and divinity, the latter of which were delivered by those justly celebrated Divines of Germany, Paul Anton, Joachim Justus Breithaupt, and Augustus Herman Franke. Their excellent instructions, accompanied as they were by a holy and exemplary life, proved a great and lasting blessing. He became most deeply convinced of his own sinful state by nature, of his utter unworthiness in the sight of a holy and heart searching God, and of his entire inability to save himself by any merit, virtue, or strength of his own; but he was also led to take refuge in that hope set before us

For most of what I here communicate, I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. Ubele, Pastor of the German Lutheran congregation in Brown's Lane.

in the gospel. Christ became exceedingly precious to his soul; to him he came weary and heavy laden, and in him he found refreshment and rest. He received him as made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and being penetrated with a sense of his infinite mercy and compassion, and constrained by his love, he had no greater desire than to glorify him in his body and in his spirit. He was often afflicted with ill health, and had also to struggle with many inward temptations and conflicts; though this incapacitated him for entering on the busy scenes of life, it did not prevent his rendering himself useful to a considerable number of Christians. His peculiar talents were christian conversation, and writing on subjects of experimental and practical Christianity. His most useful work was that intituled, "The Golden Treasury," the first part of which he composed whilst studying in the University of Halle. Its primary design was the edification of a small circle of christian friends, but it pleased Him, who can bless a grain of mustard seed, to accompany this labour of his servant, which to the men of the world appeared insignificant and even ridiculous, with such a distinguished blessing, that it not only went through upward of thirty editions in the German, but was also translated into the Dutch, French, English, and other European languages; proving a means of instruction, reproof, and consolation to thousands among different nations, and in various stations and situations of life, from the prince to the cottager. Among the former may be mentioned the late Duke of Salfelda, a truly pious prince, who was so fond of Bogatzky and his works, that he shewed him peculiar attention; and we find, that from about 1739 to 1746, Bogatzky resided in his capital.

Encouraged by the blessing of God, which so evidently rested on his first work, he proceeded in process of time to publish other pious and edifying pamphlets and treatises, suited to different classes of readers. He paid particular regard to the spiritual wants of the poor and of young people. The whole number of his publications

amounts to about 60, chiefly in prose, interspersed sometimes with a few poetical lines. His composition and style are inferior to that of several cotemporary ascetic writers, and his poetry less pleasing, but always clear and intelligible. He evidently did not write for the learned on abstruse and speculative subjects, but with a design to alarm careless sinners, to instruct and comfort those awakened from the sleep of sin, and to edify and build up believers in their most holy faith.

Among his most useful works the following deserve to be mentioned:

"Daily Companion for the Children of God, consisting of edifying reflections and prayers for every day of the year. (2 volumes. 1740, 1748.")

"Reflections on Genuine Conversion."

"The Whole System of Christianity."

The time in which the second volume of his Golden Treasury was composed, and the occasion of it, will be found noticed in the preface prefixed to it.

From the year 1746 to the time of his death, Bogatzky resided at Glaucha, near Halle, in one of the buildings founded by Aug. H. Franke. And here it may not be improper to refer in a few words to the excellent institution, called the Orphan House, established by that truly venerable Christian and Divine, who so highly distinguished himself by his benevolent exertions for the poor, and in the cause of Christianity; an institution which has, during a succession of years, entirely supported many thousand orphans of both sexes. To this were afterwards added three rows of buildings, chiefly of stone, forming long and wide streets, comprising chapels, schools, printing-offices, hospitals, libraries, museums, granaries, and different dwelling-houses for the reception of young noblemen and gentlemen, crowding at that time to the Pædagogium and the University of Halle. From 1740 to 1750, the Latin and German schools, including the orphans, were frequented by about 2500 boys and girls; of the former many came from England, Greece, Iceland, Prussia, and the East Indies.

In the midst of these resided Bogatzky, a man filled with holy zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Many of the young people were recommended to his particular care and direction, by their pious parents and relations; and he considered it a sacred duty and a real privilege and delight to give them good advice, to lead their tender minds to an early knowledge of their Creator; to represent Christ to them in all his glory and excellence; to warn them against the many temptations with which they were surrounded; to encourage those that had entered on a christian course, and to fortify their souls against every difficulty and danger which might obstruct their progress in the divine life. On this point Bogatzky thus expresses himself in his Treatise on Early Conversion.

"If it be a general duty to convert sinners of every description from the error of their way, according to the grace given to us;' how much more ought we to regard it an especial duty to exert ourselves for the conversion of those who are designed for the holy ministry, and with whom we may have frequent opportunities of conversing. This is my case. Surrounded as I am with students from every quarter, and with hundreds of young people, I deem it a sacred duty, and feel myself constrained by the love of Christ, to contribute by my prayers, by my conversation, by my example, to their spiritual and temporal peace and prosperity. I therefore frequently converse with them on the salvation of their souls; some come to me of their own accord, others recommended by their parents and tutors. On these occasions I have made it a particular point to dwell on the necessity and advantages of early conversion. The present work contains the substance of these conversations, and I indulge a hope that it may please the Lord to bless the reading of them to others."

There is another interesting passage in the same work. After having first represented the great security and carelessness prevailing among all ranks and conditions of men, even among many of the clergy, he thus proceeds:

"Although things wear a gloomy appearance, still we are powerfully called upon to bless God for his gracious visitations in the midst of these degenerate times. Much has been accomplished during the last fifty years in our Protestant churches, and more especially at Halle. Thousands have been truly awakened, well prepared for the ministry, and sent into the harvest as faithful labourers. More light has been spread in christian countries, and a change for the better produced. The hand of the Lord is not shortened, his Spirit is as active as of old. At Halle, and in many other places, the great God has his servants, whose labours are crowned with success. And not in Europe only, but also in Asia, Africa, and America, in the East and West Indies, some heathens and heathenish Christians are converted to God. In our colleges we see the work of the Lord going on among the students of the University, as well as among the boys in the schools. How plentifully is the word of God sown among us, and a variety of means are provided for teaching the truth as it is in Jesus. Here we are at full liberty to speak and teach. There is no restraint on our printing presses. Indeed our advantages and privileges are exceedingly great."

Bogatzky died about the year 1768, upwards of 70 years of age. As Christ had been his life, so to die was his gain. His name and memory are still held in veneration by multitudes, and his writings read by the sincere and pious of all classes, with much profit and edification. May this edition also of the second volume of his Golden Treasury (which has been carefully collated with the German original, and corrected in many places) prove a real blessing to all who relish the plain wholesome food of the word of God, and are disposed with an humble teachable mind to improve every hint which is given them by an old experienced Christian for their spiritual improvement. And may we all at last join that great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues, and ascribe salvation to God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Savoy, Jan. 1, 1812.

C. F. STEINKOPFF.

PREFACE.

HAVING, soon after the publication of my first pieces, felt a lively sense of the divine influence, and having received assurances from different persons, in writing as well as by word of mouth, that the blessing of God had attended them; I was thereby comforted under the infirmity, which I have often perceived in myself, and encouraged by various motives, as well as by the sensible guidance of Heaven, to proceed in labours of the same kind, and apply my little time and ability to the eternal benefit of myself and others, that the small talent committed to my trust might not be hidden, but that I may at a future period hear a voice saying unto me, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," &c.

I have not acted in this, merely from the impulse of my own will and judgment; but have waited upon the Lord, in prayer and supplication, and God hath been pleased from time to time to grant me the aid of such intimations, as friends both at home and abroad could furnish, towards some further useful undertaking. Many of my labours have been occasioned by a feeling sense of my own infirmities, and the Lord hath permitted me to enjoy the first fruits of them, and thereby strengthened me in the faith.

Being thus assured of the blessing of God in Christ upon all my writings, notwithstanding their weakness and imperfection, of which I am very conscious; and having found them, as I still do, nourishing to my own soul, as well as edifying to others; I am perfectly content, though they should not suit the corrupt taste of many, and should be misrepresented and ridiculed by more. This will not effect either me or my writings. I rather rejoice, that the Lord hath chosen me, unworthy as I am, for an object of reproach, and hath set an additional seal upon my poor writings, which assures me, that he will continue henceforward to bless them more and more. The first work I published during my academical studies was, the

well known Treasury. This harmless little book, written with great simplicity, underwent much severe censure, and was stigmatised by various ludicrous appellations. But this, instead of hindering, promoted the success of it. The demand for it has increased to such a degree, that the twenty-third edition is now in the press;* and it has been translated into several foreign languages. I do not make a merit of this to myself, which would be an abomination in the sight of God; but declare it to his praise and glory, and mention it for the comfort of those who are hated and ridiculed by the world for the truth's sake. It may serve to convince them, that our God regards not the judgment of men; the contempt, scorn, reproach, and ridicule of the world, does not cause him to withdraw his blessing; but on the contrary he will continue to fulfil the words, 1 Cor. i. 28. "Base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

I can therefore preserve my tranquillity, amidst this unavailing reproach of the world, forasmuch as nothing strange or uncommon has befallen me. Have the writings of the most faithful servants of God ever met with a better fate, when they have borne testimony against the sins prevailing among different ranks of men, and especially among men of the gravest profession? How then could I expect that my weak and inconsiderable testimony should be exempt from the reproach of the world, or intitled to the good will and praise of mankind? The world loves only its own. But how contemptible soever these ascetic pieces, written for edification, may appear to the learned at present, or however that contempt may increase with the further corruption of taste; yet a time will come, when posterity will know how to make use of these and the like simple testimonies borne to the truth. Let the faithful servants of God endeavour, by their conversation and writings, to serve both the present and future ages, in extending the kingdom of God, and their writings will not perish: whereas the works of those who seduce men from

* It is impossible to calculate the number of editions which have since appeared.

the truth, and from the power of godliness, will be scattered as chaff before the wind. Right will not cease to be right, truth will continue to be truth, and all pious hearts will adhere to it. Whilst contentious men perplex and obscure the truth, the faithful witnesses of it will disentangle and place it in the clearest light. "For after light cometh night, but vice shall not prevail against wisdom." Wisd. vii. 30.

Having therefore, as I mentioned before, perceived the gracious aid and guidance of Almighty God, seconding me in all my labours, I must affirm the same of this second part of the Golden Treasury. The occasion of the work was this: I was requested last year by a person of piety to write an appendix to the little Treasury, for the use of young persons, and to guard them against too great security as well as indifference in religion. The same person proposed to take 600 copies, and to bind them up along with the Augsburg confession, of which he had caused an edition to be printed of the same size, in order thus to circulate it the better. He soon after advanced some money for the purpose, and pressed me to the undertaking. As I could not decline so pious a request, I set about the work immediately. But the numbers increased upon me so fast, amidst such abundance of matter, that I chose to publish them, not by way of appendix, but as a second part of the said little Treasury, for the use of young persons. When it was offered to sale, the demand for it was considerable; but a hint was given, that it would be much greater if it were a second part of the Golden Treasury. I was therefore requested to undertake the work. Being just then at leisure, I had besought the Lord that he would be pleased to give me a farther intimation what to do, if it were his pleasure to prolong my life, and if he thought me worthy of his service. I considered the application made to me a call from Heaven. The Lord heard my prayer, and with the assistance of his grace I soon finished the work.

As to the arrangement of this second part of the Golden Treasury, it contains as many pieces as there are days in the year. The texts are not ranged alphabetically, but in

the order of the books of Scripture, and I have selected from each book the passages which appeared to me the most striking, and which, except here and there one, are not to be met with in the former part.

I have placed the day of the month at the top of each piece, that the devout reader may have recourse to it daily for his evening meditation, as the first part was designed for the morning. For as it is of the highest use to make the word of God our food betimes in the morning, and to draw sustenance from it throughout the day; so it is equally necessary to nourish and strengthen our souls in like manner in the evening. The main subject of the book refers constantly to Christ, the Lamb of God, though not always in express terms; and as under the Old Testament the perfect offering of atonement was prefigured by the sacrifice of a lamb every morning and evening, so it becomes us to think upon Christ, the Lamb of God, and his infinitely meritorious sacrifice for sin, night and morning. And, as in the Jewish temple, the lamps on the golden candlestick were cleansed and supplied with fresh oil each morning and evening, that the fire might never be extinguished, so it is necessary, agreeably to this type, that we should daily purify our lamps and supply them with oil. And this effect is produced by the word of God and by prayer.

The heads of Christian families may draw from hence the subject of a short evening meditation; or they may only read these, and form their prayers upon them. And to make it the more suitable to the devotion of the evening, I have frequently alluded to that part of the day in the remarks or prayers subjoined to each text. I have besides, here and there, recommended self-examination and preparation for a happy death. What can be more interesting, before we retire to rest, than to examine ourselves, how we have spent the day, and to remember and prepare for our latter end? for many of us lie down to rest, and rise no more. I have likewise taken every occasion, as far as my narrow limits would permit, to treat of the genuine means of salvation, of repentance and faith, or a true conversion, so as not to deprive the penitent of the comforts

which he may need; nor to administer false comfort to the presumptuous, but to excite them to true repentance.

And as our God himself is at this time preaching repentance, by the means of his extraordinary judgments, both spiritual and temporal, particularly by the terrible earthquakes, and the bloody wars which followed them, and as we know not what greater judgments may still be in store for the latter times; I have therefore taken such occasions as were offered by the words before me, to consider these judgments of God as the signs of our days, and by entering into his holy designs to hint at such particular sins as prevail in the present age.

The principal sins of our days are, libertinism and contempt of the word of God; whence arises that perpetually increasing spirit of injustice, that general security, carelessness and luxury, as if no danger were impending. But the heaviest of the divine judgments is that unhappy falling off in the ministry and among those who are candidates for it, by which God converts sin itself into an instrument of punishing sin; when men, who are secure in their sins, fall into the hands of teachers, whom they follow, with itching ears; as he threatened judicially to punish the disobedient and the scorners, by "raising up such shepherds in the land, as visit not their flock," Zech, xi. 16. But we read, in ver. 17. "Wo to the idol shepherd, that leaveth the flock; the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye," &c. Now the great temporal judgments of Heaven are intended to punish these sins, and to prevent the greater spiritual judgments. We may observe this in our Protestant church, which it is certainly the design of God to purge and cleanse, as his threshing floor, at this time.

According to the words of Christ, it is an instance of true wisdom, and our duty to take heed to the signs of our times, and to be awakened by them to repentance, confirmed in the faith, and prepared for all future events. For this purpose may the Lord give a blessing to this work for his name's sake. Amen.

C. H. v. BOGATSKY.

Halle, March 13, 1760.

A

GOLDEN TREASURY.

PART II.

JANUARY I.

And God said, Let there be light. GEN. i. 3. See also 2 COR. iv. 6. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.

WE are, by nature, full of spiritual darkness, even as the formless earth was dark before the creation of light. Is it not therefore necessary that God should powerfully command a new creation within us, and enlighten us through his Spirit, by the means of his word? Examine thyself, O my soul! Hath this new creation, this new birth and illumination, taken place in thee? Thou art now concluding the first day of this new year; how soon mayest thou conclude the last day of thy life! Unless thou art regenerate and enlightened by divine grace, thou wilt sink into everlasting darkness, and endure the second death. "Alarming thought!" Awake, therefore, thou that sleepest, &c. Enlighten me, O my God, that I may truly repent of my folly and sins, and contemplate in the appropriating exercises of faith, thy love and mercy in Christ Jesus. May I ever walk in the light, as a child of light; that when I arrive at the dark valley of the shadow of death, I may fear no evil.

Lord, while the frame of nature stands,
Thy praise shall fill my tongue;
But the new world of grace demands
A more exalted song.

JANUARY II.

And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. And Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. GEN. vi. 3, 5, 9.

ACCORDING to the fifth verse, every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is evil and corrupt. Is not this strongly evinced, when men continually resist those divine influences which can alone produce repentance? God often gives us sufficient time and leisure, upon the misuse of which he frequently inflicts temporal and eternal punishment on the impenitent. However decent our external behaviour may be, we must all be regenerated, and shew it by new obedience; we must receive a different spirit from that which annimates the men of this world, or be lost for ever. And is not this possible? Did not Noah walk with God, in times of abounding iniquity? We, as Christians, should daily confess the iniquity of our hearts, and suffer the Spirit of God to correct us. Lord, grant that the conclusion of this day may conclude the carnality of my mind, and that to-morrow I may begin a new life. Pardon all my sins for Christ's sake, and grant that I may suffer thy Spirit to rebuke me, and never strive against its divine influence.

Our breath is forfeited by sin
To God's revenging law:
We owe thy grace, immortal King,
In every gasp we draw.

JANUARY III.

And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. GEN. vi. 12. See also MATT. xxiv. 38, 39.

MANKIND, before the second coming of the Son of man, are described by the situation of the Antediluvians. It is true there is no gross vice imputed to them; we only read, that they were carnal, intent upon eating, drinking, and marrying—upon the present, not upon a future life; and

regarded not the warnings of God; consequently were secure and negligent of their immortal souls. The deluge came, and with extensive devastation swept them all away. Are not the men of the present age equally careless, intent only upon the present life, and the momentary pleasures thereof, and regardless of the divine warnings and calls to repentance? Hence the judments which arise from time to time, when God punishes the earthly carnal mind with fire and sword, and makes the thoughtless tremble with fear. Lord, enable us to repent this very evening, and guard us against that fatal security; that we may provide rather for the life to come than for the present, and not despise the warnings of thy word.

The Lord, from his celestial throne,
Look'd down on things below,
To find the man that sought his grace,
Or did his justice know.
By nature all are gone astray,
Their practice all the same;
There's none that fears his Maker's hand,
There's none that loves his name.

JANUARY IV.

And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle, *insomuch that they experienced his gracious remembrance. for* HE made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged. GEN. viii. 1.

GOD is ever mindful of his children, though despondency seizes them in their distress, and they often imagine that he has forgot them. "It was thus," says Luther, "that Noah perceived God had not forgotten him, after he had been tossed about upon the water near half a year, without comfort, and it seemed to Noah as though God had forgotten him." Though God seems to have forgotten us, let this be our comfort, that others among the faithful have shared the same fate, as indeed the whole church says, "God hath forgotten to be gracious." But he cannot forget us; for he hath deeply engraven us on the palms of his hands; and the time will come when his gracious

remembrance will be fully evidenced. Yes, my God, dost thou take care for oxen, how much more wilt thou think upon me? O think upon us this evening according to thy great mercy, wash away our sins with the blood of Christ, and cause the waters of trouble and temptation to assuage in thy due time.

Above the heaven's created rounds,
Thy mercies, Lord, extend:
Thy truth outlives the narrow bounds
Where time and nature end.

Safety to man thy goodness brings,
Nor overlooks the beast;
Beneath the shadow of thy wings
Thy children choose to rest.

JANUARY V.

Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Fear not, for I am with thee, and I will bless thee. GEN. xxv. 1. xxvi. 24.

RAPTUROUS minds desire exemption from fear, and wish for nothing but unalloyed transport. Yet Abraham, the father of the faithful, and Jacob, and even Paul and John in the New Testament, were subject to fear. Else why should God tell them, "Fear not?" Now the fear which believers sometimes experience, should not render their faith suspected. We should make use of our fear as an impulse to our attendance on the word, on prayer, and on Christ; and firmly believe, that the Lord will be our shield and our reward, and will always be with us and bless us. My Redeemer, be thou my shield against all my enemies, enable me to fight against them faithfully and victoriously, and bless my sincere labours in thy vineyard, that after the evening of this life is past, thou mayest be eternally my exceeding great reward. May we seriously remember that evening now, and by repentance, flowing from true faith, prepare for it.

The Lord of glory is my light,
And my salvation too;
God is my strength, nor will I fear
What all my foes can do.

When troubles rise and storms appear,
There may his children hide;
God hath a strong pavillion, where
He makes my soul abide.

JANUARY VI

And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. GEN. xviii. 17, 19. See also AMOS iii. 7.

GOD informs his servants of approaching judgments, that like Abraham they may pray the more fervently, and admonish their families to fear the Lord after their death, lest they perish in his judgments. For a Christian desires not only to save himself but his whole house, and even all mankind. Let every man, particularly every master of a family, examine himself, whether he be of the same mind as Abraham. O my God, grant that I may first fear thee, and keep thy commandments myself: and then admonish others by word and example, especially those of my own household, to do the same; and that I may pray for them, lest they perish in the spiritual and temporal judgments now abroad in the world.

Return, O God of love, return,
Earth is a tiresome place;
How long shall we, thy children, mourn
Our absence from thy face?

Thy wonders to thy servants show,
Make thy own work complete,
Then shall our souls thy glory know,
And own thy love was great

JANUARY VII.

My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. And Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah-jireh. GEN. xxii. 8, 14.

THE lamb, which Abraham here refers to, was Isaac, the type of Christ. But when God called to him not to slay Isaac (the knife being in his hand), he lifted up his

eyes, and saw a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, and he sacrificed it, and called the place, "The Lord hath seen," or, *The Lord will provide.* Thus the Lord looketh upon all our distress and temptation, and will provide every thing we need, even though the trial of faith, like that of Abraham, should be carried to the utmost, without any visible way to escape. "For God," says Luther, "dwelleth in darkness, and permits us not to see him in his council chamber." The afflictions we behold impending are prevented, and help will arise, which none could foresee. Our eyes therefore must be shut, and the eyes of God will be open upon us. He has already provided and given us the true Lamb for an offering; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things needful for our souls and bodies? Lord, grant me the faith and obedience of Abraham, and the patient resignation of Isaac, that in all my necessities I may say, "The Lord will provide."

The wonders, Lord, thy love has wrought,
Exceed our praise, surmount our thought;
Should I attempt the long detail,
My speech would faint, my numbers fail.

No blood of beast, on altars spilt,
Can cleanse the souls of men from guilt:
But thou hast set before our eyes,
An all-sufficient sacrifice.

JANUARY VIII.

How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And the Lord was with Joseph, even in prison, and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper. GEN. xxxix. 9, 10, 23.

O THAT all persons, particularly young ones, were of Joseph's mind, and considered sin as a great, or rather the greatest evil; and might shun not only sin, but every occasion of sin! God would abundantly bless them, and prosper all their undertakings. Lord, preserve me and mine from all allurements to sin. Whenever we are tempted to lasciviousness or injustice, pride, anger, and other

sins, let us recollect, "How can I do this great wickedness?" Thus may the fear of thee secure us from all sin, and then may we prosper in whatsoever we do; and be thou present with us in suffering, in persecution, and particularly in death, and safely conduct us through them all.

In all my vast concerns with thee,
In vain my soul would try
To shun thy presence, Lord, or flee
The notice of thine eye.

My thoughts lie open to the Lord
Before they're form'd within;
And ere my lips pronounce the word,
He knows the sense I mean.

The beams of noon, the midnight hour,
Are both alike to thee:
O may I ne'er provoke that power
From which I cannot flee.

JANUARY IX.

And Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, according to their families. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and he spake kindly unto them. GEN. xlvii. 12. ch. l. 21.

WITH what heart-cheering comfort will Jesus address and receive us, if we sincerely repent of our sins, as Joseph's brethren did. If the Patriarch provided for his father and his brethren, each according to their families, how much more will our God, who is love itself, and is not, like Joseph, Lord over Egypt, but over the universe, provide for us and our children, however numerous? "We old fools," says Luther, "eat with the children, not they with us." God blesses the parents for the sake of the children, and supplies their wants; for they are employed in his service, and are to train up their offspring, as Christians, for his glory. Will he then suffer them to want necessaries for that purpose? What signify our distrustful cares from morning till night? We should leave our concerns to God; whilst we and our

children seek only his kingdom, all other things shall be added unto us. Some cannot sleep for care, but I remember a mother saying, "I lay my cares every night under my pillow; I cast them upon God, and sleep at ease."

My God, how excellent thy grace,
Whence all our hope and comfort springs!
The sons of Adam, in distress,
Fly to the shadow of thy wings.

From the provision of thy house
We shall be fed with sweet repast;
There mercy like a river flows,
And brings salvation to our taste.

JANUARY X.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord. GEN. xlix. 18.

MANY have received comfort from these words in death, and waited in faith for their salvation. The thoughtless and impenitent wait only for temporal prosperity in their lives, and therefore, in the hour of death, cannot expect eternal bliss, but on the contrary a dreadful judgment. O that they would enter into themselves this very evening, that at the eve of life they might, like Jacob and Simeon, depart in peace. We will not therefore look for any earthly thing, but for the Saviour, who is already come, who will grant us his salvation, his aid and deliverance in life and death, and will conduct us safely at last, though we should wait some time for his help. Yes, my Redeemer, they who wait, depend upon, and hope in thee, shall not be ashamed. Grant us only faith and patience, that we may wait upon thee from one morning watch to another; and, enduring all things, make the whole course of our lives one perpetual confident expectation of thy aid; and may we ever abundantly experience thy help and salvation, especially at our latter end.

Christ's own soft hand shall wipe the tears
From every weeping eye,
And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
And death itself shall die.

How long, dear Saviour! O how long
Shall this bright hour delay!
Fly swiftly round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day.

JANUARY XI.

The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them. EXOD. i. 12. ii. 22, 25.

THE more we are oppressed by our spiritual and temporal enemies, the more will the kingdom of God increase in and through us. And when distress and dangers oppress us most, God hastens to our aid, and makes our necessity itself the means of our relief. For the ways of God are always wonderful. It was an extreme distress, when the children of the Israelites were cast into the river; but this was the means of preserving Moses, their intended deliverer. When Moses came, they were not relieved immediately, for their calamities increased. This is God's method. But they cried more unto God, and he relieved them by signs and wonders. After this their distress was greater than ever at the Red Sea. For after God has shewn his glory in assisting us, he can still send greater trials. But when they were beset on all sides by distress and death, then came the most glorious succour of all, and their enemies perished in the Red Sea. Lord, suffer us not to despair in any extremity, but enable us to believe and experience, that the greater our distress, the nearer and more glorious will be thy aid, and all our enemies will be consumed as stubble before the devouring flame.

Lord, I am thine; but thou wilt prove
My faith, my patience, and my love;
When men of spite against me join,
They are the sword, the hand is thine.

What sinners value, I resign;
Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine;
I shall behold thy blissful face,
And stand complete in righteousness.

JANUARY XII.

And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. EXOD. xii. 10, 11, 13.

WHOEVER would receive Christ, the true passover, must receive him wholly, as the righteousness and holiness of a guilty creature: he must receive him with the bitter seasoning of remorse and repentance, and suffer no leaven of hypocrisy, no reigning sin, to be intermixed; he must gird his loins, keep his feet shod, take a staff in his hand, and hasten away; consider himself as a stranger here, and direct his heart perpetually towards eternal life. He must not relinquish Christ, his strong fortress, nor seek comfort otherwise than in his blood; so will the Lord not suffer the destroyer to enter his house and his heart. Lord Jesus, grant that we may this very evening so receive thee; and sprinkle, O sprinkle our hearts with thy blood, that the enemy may ever pass over us, and no plague come nigh our dwelling.

Lo the destroying angel flies
To Pharaoh's stubborn land!
The pride and flow'r of Egypt dies
By his vindictive hand.

He pass'd the tents of Jacob o'er,
Nor pour'd his wrath divine:
He saw the blood on ev'ry door,
And blessed the peaceful sign.

Lord, if my heart were sprinkled too
With blood so rich as thine,
Justice no longer would pursue
This guilty soul of mine.

JANUARY XIII.

Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Exod. xiv. 13, 14, 15.

How believing and confident was Moses, when he thus addressed the despairing people of Israel! But when God said, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" it is plain that his faith was somewhat wavering, which occasioned him to cry so earnestly in his heart to God. "Observe, saith Luther, "the combats, struggles, and cries of faith in danger and distress, how closely it cleaves to God, and receives from him comfort and victory." When we are thus possessed of faith and peace, we must nevertheless continue in prayer. Lord, grant us truly to believe, to pray and stand still. But let our most silent sighs become a loud and efficacious cry before thee. Fight, O fight for us against all our enemies, that we may experience thy salvation.

In thine own ways, O God of love,
We wait the visit of thy grace:
Our soul's desire is to thy name,
And the remembrance of thy face.

Hark! the Eternal rends the sky,
A mighty voice before him goes;
A voice of music to his friends,
But threat'ning thunder to his foes.

Come, children, to your father's arms,
Hide in the chambers of my grace,
Till the fierce storms be overblown,
And my revenging fury cease.

My sword shall boast its thousands slain,
And drink the blood of haughty kings;
While heavenly peace around my flock
Stretches its soft and shady wings.

JANUARY XIV.

If thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies. Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. I will send my fear

before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. EXOD. xxiii. 22, 25, 27.

IF we obey the voice of Christ, in doing all that he hath commanded us, and exclusively serve God, that is, fear, love, and trust in him above all things, then will he send his fear before us against all our enemies both spiritual and temporal, and put them to flight; he will bless us, and take away all sickness from the midst of us. God continues even at this day, to send his fear before a small army, and render it formidable to its enemies. Lord, grant that we may all acknowledge this; and when our enemies are afraid, may we ascribe it to thee alone, not to ourselves, lest the same fear and terror should befal us.

When God, our leader, shines in arms,
What mortal heart can bear
The thunder of his loud alarms?
The lightning of his spear?

He rides upon the winged wind,
And angels in array
In millions wait to know his mind,
And swift as flames obey.

We fly to our eternal Rock,
And find a sure defence:
His holy name our lips invoke,
And draw salvation thence.

Oft has the Lord whole nations blest
For his own church's sake;
The pow'rs that give his people rest
Shall of his care partake.

JANUARY XV.

On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever. The life of the flesh is the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. LEVIT. xvi. 30, 31. xvii. 11.

OUR great day of atonement is that on which Christ shed his blood for us on the cross, and thereby made

atonement for us. Now if it was necessary for the Israelites to afflict their souls on their great day of atonement, how much more ought we to humble ourselves by unfeigned repentance, if we desire an interest in the propitiation made by Christ Jesus? And as they abstained from all labour on that day, when the high priest alone was employed, so should we abstain from all our sinful works, and particularly from all self-sufficiency of righteousness, and seek our salvation only in the meritorious blood of atonement shed by our High Priest; for the life of our souls is in the blood of Jesus. O my Redeemer, may we with afflicted souls ever seek our atonement, life, and salvation in thy blood and death; and may we go to rest this evening, in full confidence that we are pardoned through thy blood.

Jesus, my great High Priest, has died,
I seek no other sacrifice beside;
His blood did once for all atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.

My Advocate appears on high,
The Father lays his thunder by;
Not all that earth or hell can say
Shall turn my Father's heart away.

JANUARY XVI.

It is the burnt-offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out. LEV. vi. 9, 12.

So likewise the seven lamps upon the seven golden candlesticks were never to be extinguished; they were to be supplied with oil every morning and evening, and incense was daily to be offered. The fire of love, with which Jesus offered himself for us and reconciled us, hath burned incessantly; and in like manner the fire of our love and ardent desire towards Jesus should burn within us daily, and never be extinct. But it must be the fire from the altar, and no strange fire; that is, all our ardour and love must arise from hence, that Jesus offered himself

for us upon the altar of his cross. We must not therefore offer to God any strange fire of our own merits. Grant me, Lord Jesus, rightly to discern thy ardent eternal love upon the cross, and do thou keep the fire of love on my part, and of fervency in prayer, perpetually burning within me, and let me never suffer it to be quenched. Anoint me therefore daily, morning and evening, with fresh oil from thy Holy Spirit, that my lamp may ever burn, and I may be ready for thee in my last moments.

Our spirits join t' adore the Lamb;
O that our feeble lips could move
In strains immortal as his name,
And melting as his dying love!

Was ever equal pity found!
The Prince of Life resigns his breath,
And pours his life out on the ground,
To ransom guilty worms from death.

In vain our mortal voices strive
To speak compassion so divine:
Had we a thousand lives to give,
A thousand lives should all be thine.

JANUARY XVII.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. LEV. xix. 17.

ALTHOUGH brotherly rebuke is very unfashionable, and very seldom received with temper, yet he who neglects to admonish and rebuke his brother, doth not love him, but he is here said to hate his brother, and to suffer sin upon him; that is, he shall be punished for not having admonished and warned his brother. But in order to this, we must first be converted ourselves; and then we read, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke xxii. 32. Else our rebuke is merely severe censure, and not the offspring of Christian love. Lord Jesus, do thou convert our own hearts, and amend them first, and then teach us to rebuke our brethren in love, and to receive their rebukes. And grant us all, in this place

and this house, to be edified and amended by one another; "For whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof *is* brutish." Prov. i. 12.

My God, accept my early vows,
Like morning incense in thine house,
And let my nightly worship rise
Sweet as the evening sacrifice.

Watch o'er my lips, and guard them, Lord,
From ev'ry rash and heedless word;
Nor let my feet incline to tread
The guilty path where sinners lead.

O may the righteous, when I stray,
Smite and reprove my wand'ring way!
Their gentle words, like ointment shed,
Shall never bruise, but cheer my head.

When I behold them prest for grief,
I cry to heav'n for their relief;
And, by my warm petitions, prove
How much I prize their faithful love.

JANUARY XVIII.

At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. NUMB. ix. 18, 19.

THUS the spiritual Israelites; they should not anticipate or undertake any thing from their own will, lest confusion or disappointment should encompass every path. The unconverted are full of their own will. How can they succeed? They are bewildered here, and rush into eternal perdition. Even believers, when acting with the best intentions, may sometimes anticipate the will of God, and not wait for his counsel. And yet the Israelites journeyed not, though the cloud tarried many days, and they might imagine they were losing time on their journey. O my God, grant that in all things, even in my best works, I may be guided by thine eye, and wait for thy counsel with calm resignation; may I speak or be silent, work or rest, when and as thou

will; then shall all my ways be blest, and thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me.

My God, the steps of pious men
Are order'd by thy will.
Though they should fall, they rise again,
Thy hand supports them still.

I choose the path of heavenly truth,
And glory in my choice:
Not all the riches of the earth
Could make me so rejoice.

JANUARY XIX.

Hear, O Israel, the LORD our GOD is one LORD. (*He, therefore, only is to be worshipped.*) And thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. DEUT. vi. 4—7.

THIS is a lesson particularly addressed to parents and heads of families. O that they would this very evening, before they lie down, impress the word of God on the minds of their children and servants, and repeat the same work every morning. "For," says Luther, "they should always inculcate the word of God, and exercise themselves in it, and not suffer their minds to grow rusty and dark, but always keep the word alive and bright in their memories. For the more we handle the word of God, the brighter and fresher it grows. Whereas, if we neglect it, it will soon be forgotten and lose its power." Lord! make thy word to grow in our hearts brighter, more powerful and lively; and grant that we may impress it upon those who belong to us.

Great God! thy glories shall employ
My holy fear, my humble joy:
My lips in songs of honour bring
Their tribute to th' Eternal King.

O tell me, with a gentle voice,
Thou art my God, and I'll rejoice!
Fill'd with thy love, I dare proclaim
The brightest honours of thy name.

JANUARY XX.

Thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy GOD: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. Know therefore, that the LORD thy GOD, he is GOD, the faithful GOD, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him, to their face, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. DEUT. vii. 6, 9, 10.

How much more ought Christians to be a holy people? and how much more earnestly ought they to follow after holiness? yet the unhappy word derides holiness. But God is nevertheless true and faithful, and will certainly fulfil his threats against them that hate him, and, affecting thought! it appears that he will not long delay. He will also as surely fulfil all his promises to the faithful, and keep his covenant and mercy; for he remains the eternal and true God, who cannot lie. Lord! let us believe and experience this in our hearts, and be assured this very evening of thy everlasting faithfulness.

The Lord his people loves,
His hand no good withholds
From those his heart approves,
From pure and pious souls:
Thrice happy he,
O God of hosts,
Whose spirit trusts
Alone in Thee.

God is our sun and shield,
Our light and our defence,
With gifts his hands are fill'd,
We draw our blessings thence;
He shall bestow
On Jacob's race,
Peculiar grace,
And glory too.

JANUARY XXI.

When thou hast eaten and art full, then shalt thou bless the LORD thy GOD, for the good land which he hath given thee. Lest thine heart be lifted up, &c. But thou shalt remember

the LORD thy GOD; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth. Understand, therefore, that the LORD thy GOD giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people. DEUT. viii. 10, 14, 18, ix. 6.

How easily are men lifted up when God gives them victory, or any spiritual or temporal blessing. He strikes our enemies with fear and terror, and, sad to tell! we are shamefully inclined to ascribe this to ourselves, as if it were in own power to intimidate the enemy. But how soon may our triumph and courage be changed! In like manner we are apt to forget our God, by not being duly thankful for the blessings we receive in body and soul. Grant, O my God! that we may humbly ascribe to Thee, and to Thee alone, every blessings we receive, whether it be spiritual or temporal, and that we may be heartily thankful to Thee at all times, and particularly this evening.

We bless the Lord, the just, the good,
Who fills our hearts with joy and food:
Who pours his blessings from the skies,
And loads our days with rich supplies.
He sends the sun his circuit round,
To chear the fruit, to warm the ground:
He bids the clouds, with plenteous rain,
Refresh the thirsty earth again.
'Tis to his care we owe our breath,
And all our near escapes from death;
Safety and health to God belong,
He heals the weak, and guards the strong.

JANUARY XXII.

And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy GOD require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy GOD, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments, which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither you go to possess it. DEUT. x. 12, 16. xi. 8.

IF the Israelites under the law were under obligations to love the Lord with all their heart and all their soul,

and to walk in all his ways, is it not much more the duty and privilege of Christians under the gospel, to walk in all the ways of God; knowing that they are not travelling towards an earthly Canaan, but towards their eternal home in Heaven? They advance in the ways of God's commandments, to take possession of that land, and may therefore assure themselves of perpetual victory and complete salvation. Lord! grant that we may heartily cleave to thee, and follow thee in faith and love; that we may not divide our hearts, and be only half Christians, but that all our steps may be one direct course and preparation for heaven. O may we receive continually fresh assurances that we are walking in the right path, and shall arrive at our eternal inheritance in the paradise of unceasing pleasure.

Eternal Sov'reign of the sky,
And Lord of all below,
We mortals, to thy Majesty,
Our first obedience owe.

If God to me his statutes shew
And heavenly truth impart,
His work for ever I'll pursue,
His law shall rule my heart.

JANUARY XXIII.

The poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land. Because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. DEUT. xv. 10, 11. Thou shalt not wrest judgment, thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. - xvi. 19.

O THAT all men, particularly the rich and magistrates, would observe this! Surely all wish, or ought to wish for a divine blessing in every undertaking, and to reap an abundant harvest of blessings in a future and glorious state of immortality. Let them, therefore, sow a blessed seed; that is, distribute their beneficence to the poor. But some men not only withold their beneficence, but,

shame to human nature; receive gifts. These become blind, and pervert justice. It concerns both magistrates and Christian teachers to consider this. Lord, grant us all benevolent minds; let no one be blinded by gifts to wrest judgment, or pronounce a comfortable absolution, in favour of the impenitent rich: for how shall they be able to stand in the judgment!

Happy is he that fears the Lord,
And follows his commands,
Who lends the poor without reward,
Or gives with liberal hands.

As pity dwells within his breast,
To all the sons of need,
So God shall answer his request,
With blessings on his seed.

No evil tidings shall surprize
His well established mind:
His soul to God, his refuge, flies,
And leaves his fears behind.

JANUARY XXIV.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, like unto me, &c. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, &c. DEUT. xviii. 15, 16.

THE children of Israel were at mount Horeb, when the law was delivered with thunder and lightning, and they were afraid, and said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exod. xx. 19. They now wanted a mediator, and begged of Moses to undertake the office. God accepted their prayer, as if they had applied for Christ the true Mediator; for God looked not on their words, but on the heart. It was sin that was affected, and trembled, and sought for mercy Thus the favours of God still exceed both our prayers and our understanding; for we know not how or what we should pray for as we ought, and God hears our prayer not according to our sense, or to our contracted feeble hearts, but according to his abundant goodness, and to the riches of his glory. This

should incline us to delight in prayer, and inspire us with full and filial confidence, O my God! we seldom know how to pray, and what it becomes us to ask; let thy Spirit help our infirmities, by making intercession in our hearts; and let us be assured in faith, that thou wilt certainly hear our prayer more fully than we could wish or imagine; we have often experienced this when, upon our intreaties that God would answer our prayer, he hath far exceeded our requests and wishes.

We bless the prophet of the Lord,
Who comes with truth and grace;
Jesus, thy Spirit, and thy word,
Shall lead us in thy ways.

We rev'rence our high priest above,
Who offer'd up his blood,
And lives to carry on his love,
By pleading with our God.

JANUARY XXV.

And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thine heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee, this day, life and good, and death and evil. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you. DEUT. xxx. 6, 14, 15, 19.

IF God would circumcise the hearts of the Israelites under the law, so that they loved him with all their heart; how much more may and will he do the same towards Christians under the gospel? But life and death are likewise set before us, and God calls heaven and earth to record, that no one is excusable, who doth not love him. Fulfil, O Lord! this promise to us also, and to our seed, that through thy grace we may love thee with all our hearts, and so make choice of the good, the life and the blessing which thou hast placed before us, lest heaven and earth should bear record against us.

The promise was divinely free,
Extensive was the grace,
"I will the God of Abraham be,
And of his numerous race."

He said, and with a bloody seal,
Confirm'd the word he spoke:
Long did the sons of Abraham feel
The sharp and painful yoke.

'Till God's own Son descending low,
Gave his own flesh to bleed;
And Gentiles taste the blessings now,
From the hard bondage freed.

The God of Abraham claims our praise,
His promises endure;
And Christ the Lord in gentler ways,
Makes the salvation sure.

JANUARY XXVI.

The Lord thy God, he will go before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them; and Joshua he will go before thee, as the Lord hath said. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee, he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. DEUT. xxxi. 3, 6.

MOSES repeats the same words of Joshua in the 7th 8th, and 23d verses, and we find them in the first chapter of the book of Joshua. Faith, therefore, and a good courage, distinct from presumption, are not so easily acquired otherwise God would not have given such repeated exhortations to them. But faithful Christians can better apply these words to themselves, and derive comfort from them than the Israelites: for they are to take possession of the heavenly Canaan, and to combat their spiritual enemies The Lord will go before us and destroy our enemies. We must, therefore, be of good comfort, and not fear the power and subtilty of our enemies, for these our enemies God certainly will not protect. O my God! do thou inspire us with this courage, and give us assurance, that thou art with us, fightest for us against our enemies, and wilt at length give a happy issue to all our troubles.

Jesus, the Lord, shall guard me safe
From every ill design;
And to his heav'nly kingdom keep
This feeble soul of mine.

God is my everlasting aid,
And hell shall rage in vain;
To Him be highest glory paid,
And endless praise. Amen.

JANUARY XXVII.

Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? DEUT. xxxii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

GOD is true and faithful, and will surely fulfil all his promises as well as his threatenings; but men are faithless and perverse, they keep not the vows they make to God, and thank him not for his gifts and his aid. Should we ever miraculously obtain victory and succour, we give not the glory to God alone, but ascribe it to ourselves, and celebrate our thanksgiving days with balls and plays, with dancing, revelling, and excess. God may well say, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?" Only go to to the field of battle; there your mad joy would soon vanish away. Lord, grant that we may thankfully ascribe to thee alone all our victory and every other succour, that we may judge ourselves unworthy of all thy grace and bounty, and give the glory to thee alone. Let us not, by perversely falling away from thee, provoke thee again to withdraw thy benefits, thy victory, thy succour and thy peace.

Just are thy ways, and true thy word,
Great Rock of my secure abode;
Who is a God besides the Lord?
Or where's a refuge like our God?

God is a King, of power unknown,
Firm are the orders of his throne;
If he resolve, who dare oppose,
Or ask him why, or what he does!

JANUARY XXVIII.

The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over

her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him. DEUT. xxxii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

TRUE and faithful Christians are now the genuine people of God. They can apply these words peculiarly to themselves; they are the part, the inheritance, and the property of the Lord Jesus; for they come to him, and are given to him by his Father. He neither can nor will lose them, John. vi. 39. He leads us through the wilderness of this world, and gives us not only his law, but his gospel too; he will cover us, as an eagle doth her young, flutter over us, expand his wings, receive and bear us thereon, over calamity and death, into everlasting life. O my Saviour! write these words, for our comfort, in our hearts: grant that we may both believe and experience them; and as thou hast borne us hitherto, so continue to bear us upon thy wings finally through death into eternal life. Amen.

The pity of the Lord,
To those who fear his name,
Is such as tender parents feel;
He knows our feeble frame.

He knows we are but dust,
Scatter'd with ev'ry breath;
His anger, like a rising wind,
Can send us swift to death.

JANUARY XXIX.

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! *(when God will punish their disobedience.)* For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; *(them will he bless.)* See now that I, even I am he, that there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. Therefore, set your hearts unto all the words, &c. For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. DEUT. xxxii. 29, 36, 39, 46, 47.

O THAT many a secure sinner was wise and would consider what will some time happen to him, particularly at the last, when God will visit his sins! O that man would attribute every succour, every victory, to God, and acknow-

ledge that all proceeds from him alone! Else we shall be put to confusion when he shall judge or punish; but he will repent him for his servants, and his word shall not be a vain thing for them, but it will be the life of their body and soul; whereas many, who despise the word of God, shorten even their temporal life. Lord, grant that we may be wise, and have mercy upon us in all thy judgments! Grant that we may attribute every thing to thee, that by a faithful adherence and obedience to thy word, we may enjoy it as our life.

Now, in the heat of youthful blood,
Remember your Creator, God;
Behold the months come hast'ning on,
When you shall say, my joys are gone.

The dust returns to dust again;
The soul, in agonies of pain,
Ascends to God; not there to dwell,
But hears her doom, and sinks to hell.

Eternal King, I fear thy name,
Teach me to know how frail I am:
And when my soul must hence remove,
Give me a mansion in thy love.

JANUARY XXX.

Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency; and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places. DEUT. xxiii. 3, 29.

How much more happy and glorious are all truly Christian people! How dear to God! Has he not chosen them before all people and nations? They are his saints, whom he sanctifies daily by his Spirit; and they are in his hands, and sit down with Mary at his feet, and hear his gracious words. And they may rest assured that he is their salvation, the Saviour of their souls, their shield, sword, help, and victory, so that all their spiritual and temporal enemies must completely fail. O my God! enable us to believe and be comforted by thy promise; and let us, thy beloved and chosen people, hear thy cheering

words, continue in thy hand, and obtain a course of victories and blessings.

Great God! attend while Zion sings
The joy that from thy presence springs;
To spend one day with thee on earth
Exceeds a thousand days of mirth.

God is our sun, he makes our day;
God is our shield, he guards our way,
From all th' assaults of hell and sin,
From foes without, and foes within.

All needful grace will God bestow,
And crown that grace with glory too:
He gives us all things, and withholds
No real good from upright souls.

JANUARY XXXI.

As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua: he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. Jos. xi. 15. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. Jos. xxi. 44, 55. and xxiii. 24.

WHOEVER conducts himself, in all respects, according to the rules of Scripture, will find God fulfilling to him all the promises of his word; not one shall fail, or fall to the ground; in like manner he will fulfil all his threatenings against those who do not keep his word. Lord! assist us, that we may in no respect omit doing that which thou hast commanded, that we may obtain every promised blessing, and incur no curse; and that not a word of thy promises to us may fail, or remain unfulfilled.

Praise to the goodness of the Lord,
Who rules his people by his word;
And, there, as strong as his decrees,
He sets his kindest promises.

Whence then should doubts and fears arise?
Why trickling sorrows drown our eyes?
Slowly, alas! our mind receives
The comfort that our Maker gives.

FEBRUARY I.

The Lord your God is he that hath fought for you. Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, &c. know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will not drive out any of these nations before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides. Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. Jos. xxiii. 3, 11, 12, 13, 14.

THUS it is, that parents and teachers should admonish their children and congregations before their final departure; and indeed all of us should take heed unto our souls, and rouse ourselves to the most earnest conflict with our spiritual enemies, else they will become snares and traps, scourges and thorns to us. But all the succour we receive, every victory, spiritual and temporal, should be ascribed to God; and we should confess, that he hath fought and conquered for us; for if we exalt ourselves, by assuming merit, God will surely suffer us to fall. He will in no respect tolerate pride, because we thereby rob him of his honour. Guard our souls, O Lord; keep us in perpetual conflict with our enemies, and give us true humility.

God of my childhood, and my youth,
The guide of all my days,
I have declar'd thy heavenly truth,
And told thy wondrous ways.

Let me thy pow'r and truth proclaim
To the surviving age,
And leave a savour of thy name,
When I shall quit the stage.

FEBRUARY II.

But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord. The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. Jos. xxiv. 15, 16, 24.

SO Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, that they should not forsake the Lord. O how worthy

would it be of every teacher or head of a family to make a covenant in time, and especially before his latter end, with those belonging to him, and how becoming would it be in each of them to say, "I and my house, we will serve the Lord!" Yet how often doth it happen, that pious parents have children who do not serve the Lord, and forsake him still more after their death? O my God, assist me and my house in serving thee the Lord, and far be it from us ever to forsake thee. And should any of my house have already forsaken thee; Lord, bring them back, that I and mine may be saved at the last decisive day. Grant, therefore, that we may this evening renew our covenant with thee, that we may serve thee willingly in all things, and continue faithful to thee unto death.

Of justice and of grace I sing,
And pay my God my vows,
Thy grace and justice, heav'nly King,
Teach me to rule my house.

Now to my tent, O God, repair,
And make thy servant wise:
I'll suffer nothing near me there
That shall offend thy eyes.

The man that doth his neighbour wrong,
By falsehood or by force;
The scornful eye, the sland'rous tongue,
I'll thrust them from my doors.

I'll seek the faithful and the just,
And will their help enjoy;
These are the friends that I shall trust,
The servants I'll employ.

FEBRUARY III.

And also that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And they could not any longer stand before their enemies, whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil. JUDGES ii. 10, 14, 15.

THIS is still the case. When God hath done great things, as he did at the time of the reformation, and in the

time of our fathers, then many serve the Lord. But when the old and faithful witnesses depart this life, then another generation arises, who know not the Lord. And it is the highest spiritual judgment when such a depraved generation arises among ministers, or persons intended for the ministry. If these are salt without savour, and yet are protected, then God approaches with his terrible temporal judgments, with war and other plagues; whithersoever men go out, the hand of the Lord is against them for evil. For it is written, "With the froward thou shalt learn frowardness." Lord, grant that our hearts may be duly affected by thy spiritual and temporal judgments, lest we or those belonging to us should be carried away by a perverse generation.

Thy works with sov'reign glory shine,
And speak thy majesty divine:
Let Britain round her shores proclaim
The sound and honour of thy name.

Let distant times and nations raise
The long succession of thy praise;
And unborn ages make my song
The joy and labour of their tongue.

FEBRUARY IV.

And Samson said, With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout. JUDGES xv. 16, 18, 19.

THESE are words of instruction and comfort. Though our enemies, spiritual or temporal, should exult as conquerors, yet they shall be slain. But we must ascribe the glory to God, and not be elated, as it seems Samson was, when he said, "*I* have slain them," If we exalt ourselves, new distresses will befal and humble us, as was the case of Samson, who afterwards said, "Thou hast given this great deliverance." It becomes us therefore, in every distress,

in every struggle, and particularly in that spiritual languor of our souls, to humble ourselves before God, and call upon him, that he may refresh us with the water of life, though our hearts were as hard and as dry as a bone; then we shall overcome all our enemies. Lord Jesus, grant us victory, and keep us in humility. And when thou triest us again, give us grace to pray and call upon thee, that so we may again be refreshed.

Sing to the Lord aloud,
And make a joyful noise;
God is our strength, our Saviour God:
Let Israel hear his voice.

But, O! that all his saints
Would hearken to his voice,
Soon would he ease their sore complaints,
And bid their hearts rejoice.

While he destroys their foes,
He'll richly feed his flock;
And they shall taste the stream that flows
From the eternal Rock.

FEBRUARY V.

Whither thou goest, *said Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi*, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. All that thou sayest unto me, I will do. So likewise Boaz said to Ruth: I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know, thou art a virtuous woman. RUTH i. 16, 17. iii. 5, 11.

RUTH was a Gentile, and yet manifested such love towards her mother-in-law, and to her God, that God honoured her with a place in the lineage of the Messiah. She was ready to do all that Naomi required of her, and Boaz was ready in return to do all that she required of him. Thus it is, that God rewards faith and obedience. These things are written for the admonition of us all, particularly of young persons. If they are faithful to others, especially to those of their own household, they will certainly experience God to be faithful in return. O my God, grant that we may be faithful to men, but more

especially so to thyself, that nothing, not even death, may separate us from thee, and that we may sincerely say, "I will do all that thou requirest." So wilt thou in return grant unto us all that we can ask or desire.

Lord, I address thy heav'nly throne,
Call me a child of thine;
Send down the Spirit of thy Son
To form my heart divine.

There shed thy choicest loves abroad,
And make my comfort strong:
Then shall I say, my Father, God,
With an unwav'ring tongue.

FEBRUARY VI.

Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The Lord killeth and maketh alive, &c. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness. 1 Sam. ii. 3, 6, 9.

It ill becomes man to be arrogant, and to set up his own judgment against the ways of God, who is a God of knowledge, and by whom actions are weighed. It is observable, how strictly God requires holiness even under the Old Testament; how much more will he now require holiness in those whom he protects? he will keep the feet only of his saints, and the obstinately wicked shall be silent in darkness. Lord, thou killest and makest alive; make us alive, renew and sanctify us, and keep thou our feet, that we may persevere in the paths of faithful obedience, and may shut out from our hearts whatsoever is sinful. O that thy grace might enable us this evening to put away from us every unholy thing, and thoroughly reform our conduct.

Is this the kind return,
And these the thanks we owe?
Thus to abuse eternal love,
Whence all our blessings flow!

On us God bids the sun
Shed his reviving rays;
For us the skies their circles run,
To lengthen out our days.

The brutes obey their God,
And bow their necks to men;
But we, more base, more brutish things,
Reject his easy reign.

Turn, turn us, mighty God,
And mould our souls afresh;
Break, sovereign Grace, these hearts of stone,
And give us hearts of flesh.

FEBRUARY VII.

And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli: and the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him; *(according to ch.* ii. he grew before the Lord) and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. 1 SAM. iii. 1, 19, 20, 22.

O THAT all teachers, all candidates for the office, would imitate Samuel, that the same thing might in due proportion be said of them. But how many are there, who content themselves with the shell, instead of the kernel, of divine revelation. They only fill their heads, not their hearts, and never receive the word so as to be fed and nourished thereby. And when this is the case, the word of the Lord will grow scarce. But when no solid nourishment is to be found for the soul, men will grow weary of feeding upon husks; they will hunger after the word of God. And then God will again raise up a Samuel. Lord, make thy word precious to us, and cause us to hunger after it; and send us many such preachers as Samuel, who will not suffer their own souls and those of other men to perish for want of substantial food.

In vain we lavish out our lives
To gather empty wind;
The choicest blessings earth can yield,
Will starve a hungry mind.

Come, and the Lord shall feed our souls
With more substantial meat;
With such as saints in glory love,
With such as angels eat.

FEBRUARY VIII.

The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken.
1 Sam. iv. 22.

Spiritual judgments were advanced very high in the time of Eli the high priest. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were themselves wicked wretches, and yet Eli, regarded them more than God, and was very blameable for his lenity towards them. Upon this temporal judgments broke in upon them; 30,000 of the children of Israel, and among them the two sons of Eli, were slain by the Philistines, the ark of the covenant was taken, Eli, broke his neck, the wife of Phinehas died of her fright in childbed, and she spoke the words above quoted,—"the glory is departed," &c. It is observable, that when the spiritual and temporal judgments are arrived at their greatest height, they were removed, and the glory returned. Samuel preached the word of God again, and obtained victory over the enemy. The spiritual judgments of God were at a great height before the reformation, and then came Luther. There was a great falling off after this, even at the universities; then God produced many witnesses at once, and provided great help and amendment. If at this time spiritual judgments should increase, and temporal judgments break upon us, God will raise us not only one Samuel, but an host of witnesses; he will cause the light to arise out of darkness, and manifest his glory in assisting us. Grant therefore, Lord, that we may adhere to thy truth, and ever pray for faithful labourers; thou wilt preserve thy truth, however men may obscure it.

In Sion God is known,
A refuge in distress:
How bright has his salvation shone
Thro' all her palaces!

In every new distress
We'll to his house repair;
We'll think upon his wond'rous grace,
And seek deliverance there.

FEBRUARY IX.

Fear not, and turn ye not aside, for then shall we go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people, 1 Sam. xii. 20, 21, 22.

Though the people of Israel had sinned against God in desiring a king, yet, when they were affrighted by the voice of the thunder, and penitently confessed their sins, Samuel comforted them, and gave them this admonition. Christians are now the elect people of God. If we commit sin and fall into danger and distress, then, if we penitently confess our sins, the Lord will speak to us thus, "Fear not," and we may be assured, that the Lord will not forsake us for his great name's sake. However unworthy we may be, still we are his people and his property, which he will powerfully protect. Lord, suffer us not to desert thee any more, but grant that we may serve thee with all our hearts, and not go after vain things, which cannot save us in danger or in death.

Blest are the men who keep thy word,
And practise thy commands;
With their whole heart they seek the Lord,
And serve thee with their hands.

Great is their peace who love thy law,
How firm their souls abide!
Nor can a bold temptation draw
Their steady feet aside.

Then shall my heart have inward joy,
And keep my face from shame.
When all thy statutes I obey,
And honour all thy name.

Vile as the dross the wicked are;
And those who leave thy ways
Shall see salvation from afar,
But never taste thy grace.

FEBRUARY X.

When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made head of the tribes of Israel? wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord? For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and

stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry; because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 1. Sam. 17, 19, 23.

When Saul was little in his own eyes, he obtained favour of God and became a king: as soon as he was elated, and rejected the word of God, by saving what he should have destroyed he was rejected; because disobedience to God and his word is a very great sin, as great as the sin of witchcraft; for God will support his authority, and enforce his word. O my God, grant that we and our families may be conscientious observers of thy word, and strictly obey thy commandments, lest thou should reject us. Let us not think lightly of any sin, but consider every act of disobedience, as the sin of witchcraft, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Impress thy holy fear upon our hearts this very evening, that we may never depart from thee, and always continue little in our own sight, and thus preserve us, by thy word and grace, to life everlasting. Amen.

Lord, I would spread my sore distress,
And guilt before thine eyes;
Against thy laws, against thy grace,
How high my crimes arise!

Should'st thou condemn my soul to death,
And crush my flesh to dust,
Heav'n would approve the vengeance well,
And earth must own it just.

I from the stock of Adam came,
Unholy and unclean;
All my original is shame,
And all my nature sin.

Born in a world of guilt, I drew
Contagion with my breath;
And as my days advanc'd, I grew
A juster prey to death.

FEBRUARY XI.

Let no man's heart fail because of him; they servant will go and fight with the Philistine. For he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord, that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me

out of the hand of this Philistine. *To him said David*, Thou comest to me with a sword and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, whom thou hast defied. 1 Sam. xvii. 32, 36, 37, 45.

David was a type of Christ, who was beset by Satan, forty days, as Israel was by Goliah. Now as the victory of David was the victory over all Israel, so the victory gained by Christ is ours. When therfore Satan steps forth against us, like a Goliah, let no man's heart fail because of him. We shall overcome him, as Christ did, with the word of God, which is an infallible sling; for a single word will defeat him. We have still less reason to let our hearts fail, when men step forth, like Goliah, and scorn the servants of God: and though they should advance with sword, and spear, and shield, the faithful servants of the Lord will come in the name of the God of hosts, who is with them, and to whom they pray; whereas their enemies neither do nor can pray. Lord, let not our hearts fail, when Satan or man advances like Goliah; only arm us with thy word and with prayer, and let us ever go on and maintain the victory.

For ever blessed be the Lord,
My Saviour, and my Shield,
He sends his Spirit with his word,
To arm me for the field.

FEBRUARY XII.

Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul; but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. 1 Sam. xxv. 29.

When men rise up against the servants of God, and persecute them, they certainly hurt themselves, and will be cast out, unless they repent. But the children and servants of Jehovah are bound in the bundle of life with the Lord their God; they cannot be lost, for they are bound very fast. He binds them to himself, even to his heart, in a beautiful bundle, from which neither man, nor devil, in any extremity or distress, shall be able to draw them,

nor can they be hurt, for they are carefully deposited, guarded, secure and happy. Lord save us likewise from all our enemies, especially from all sins, from all anger and revenge, as thou didst here preserve David through Abigail. Fight for us against Satan and all our enemies, and binding us fast in thy bundle of life, preserve us in thy name and in thy heart. Amen.

Arise, my gracious God,
And make the wicked flee;
They are but thy chastising rod,
To drive thy saints to thee.

Behold the sinner dies,
His haughty words are vain;
Here in this life his pleasure lies,
And all beyond is pain.

I shall behold the face
Of my forgiving God;
And stand complete in righteousness,
Wash'd in my Saviour's blood.

There's a new heav'n begun
When I awake from death,
Drest in the likeness of thy Son
And draw immortal breath.

FEBRUARY XIII.

Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart, to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant. Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house, of thy servant be blessed for ever.

GOD had given to David the great promise of the Messiah, and he came and tarried before the Lord in prayer, found his heart aright, and poured out his wants before him. Whenever God impresses any promise in a forcible manner upon our minds, we should tarry before the Lord in prayer, and pray without ceasing, that we may find our hearts right, and pour them out before him, and, as the proverb says, strike while the iron is hot; for we cannot always expect such hours. Thou, O God,

hast often impressed these words upon my heart, and I have laid them before thee again in faith, and thou hast abundantly fulfilled them in me. Continue, I beseech thee, to bless me to the end of life, and take away from me whatsoever may obstruct thy blessing, that I may be and remain thy blessed servant for evermore. Amen.

Lord I esteem thy judgments right,
And all thy statutes just;
Thence I maintain a constant fight
With every flattering lust.

Thy precepts often I survey,
I keep thy law in sight,
Through all the business of the day,
To form my actions right.

FEBRUARY XIV.

The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, the God of my rock, in him will I trust; he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour; thou savest me from violence. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God, and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears. For thou art my lamp, O Lord, and the Lord will lighten my darkness. For by thee I have run through a troop; by my God have I leaped over a wall. God's way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. 2. Sam. xxii. 2, 3, 7, 29, 30, 31.

David spake these and many of his words, at a time when God had delivered him from much distress. Experience gave him hope, and confirmed his faith. O Lord, grant that I may not so easily forget thine aid, which I have experienced, so as to behave in any new distress as if thy goodness had not been manifested to me before. On the contrary, let my faith be strengthened by former experiences of thy compassion, and let me repeat in faith the words of David, and be more and more convinced, that thou hast heard me also, that thou art my rock, my fortress, my light, and my shield, for thou art a shield to all them that put their trust in thee.

Thee will I love O Lord, my strength,
My rock, my tow'r, my high defence;
Thy mighty arm shall be my trust,
For I have found salvation thence.

In my distress I call'd on God,
When I could scarce believe him mine:
He bow'd his ear to my complaint;
Then did his grace appear divine.

FEBRUARY XV.

Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; who hast kept with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day; hearken unto my prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place. 1 KINGS, viii. 23, 24, 29.

As God fulfilled all that he promised to David, so he will fulfil all that he promises to us, and hearken to our prayer, provided we pray in the proper place, in the right house and temple: that is, in the name of Jesus, of which the temple at Jerusalem was only a type. Now as Solomon was long and earnest in prayer, that God would hear all the supplications that should be offered up to him in the Jewish temple (which occasioned Daniel at Babylon to direct his face in the act of prayer towards Jerusalem) so the Lord will much more hearken to us, praying in the name of Jesus; for he is the Lord of this temple, and greater than the temple. Lord Jesus, teach me to pray as I ought in thy name, and in true faith, and fulfil in me all thy promises.

Go worship at Immanuel's feet,
See in his face what wonders meet!
Earth is too narrow to express
His worth, his glory, or his grace.

Is he a temple? I adore
Th'indwelling majesty and pow'r;
And still to this most holy place
Whene'er I pray I turn my face

FEBRUARY XVI.

King Solomon loved many strange women. It came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 1 KINGS xi. 1, 4.

IF the wise and pious king Solomon could in his old age be so devoted to his wives, as to be seduced by them to idolatry, how great is our danger! how easily may we be allured by other creatures to depart from God! For there is a great variety of idols in the world. Vain honour, wealth, and luxury, are three idols. O how necessary is it that we should always walk in godly fear, and how diligently should young persons watch over their heart and eyes! And those who intend for the marriage state, should pray that they may not resemble the sinners before the flood, who took wives according to their fancy, who were fair but vain; alas! how many valuable characters, even in the ministry, have been perverted by a vain and foolish woman. Even Adam in paradise was seduced by Eve. O my God, preserve me from all security and seduction, from all, even the most subtil kind of idolatry, that no creature may be able to estrange me from thee.

When in the light of faith divine,
We look on things below;
Honour and gold, and sensual joy,
How vain and dangerous too;

Honour's a puff of noisy breath;
Yet men expose their blood,
And venture everlasting death
To gain that airy good.

FEBRUARY XVII.

How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him. 1 KINGS xviii. 21. Ye shall not forget, neither shall ye fear other gods. Howbeit they did not hearken.

So these nations feared not the Lord, and served their graven images (some had one image, some another.) 2 KINGS xviii. 38, 40, 41.

THUS it is, that Christians halt between two opinions; they fear God, though with a servile fear, and yet continue devoted to their idols, one to this, the other to that, though they worship not a block nor an image. Covetousness is said to be idolatry, and a covetous man, an idolater who says to his hoard, thou art my comfort. The proud man idolizes the opinion of the world, or perhaps his own person; the voluptuous makes a god of his belly; and other creatures are created into idols by the irregular passions of men. Some worship irrational beings; for idolatry is very manifold. Therefore saith John, (1 Ep. v. 21.) "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." O my God, thou hast told us, that no man can serve two masters; grant that we may walk after thee alone, and that in serving thee we may not mingle God and the world, and halt between two opinions, for thou hast promised to cleanse us from all idols; Ezek. xxvi. 24.

To what a stubborn frame
Has sin reduc'd our mind!
What strange rebellious wretches we,
And God as strangely kind!

The brutes obey their God,
And bow their necks to men;
But we more base, more brutish things
Reject his easy reign.

Turn, turn us mighty God,
And mould our hearts afresh;
Break sovereign grace, these hearts of stone,
And give us hearts of flesh.

Let bold ingratitude
Provoke our weeping eyes;
And hourly as new mercies fall,
Let hourly thanks arise.

FEBRUARY XVIII.

The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire. And after the fire, *came* a still small voice. 1 KINGS xix. 11, 12.

ELIJAH was jealors for the Lord, when Ahab caused all the prophets to be put to death, and thinking that he alone was left, wished to die. God intended by this representation to set him right, when the Lord was not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake. The still small voice of the Holy Spirit was to temper his zeal, and give him peace; to stop his complaints, and to restrain his excessive suspicions. For God had reserved to himself seven thousand, who had not served Baal; and if his thoughts were anxious about futurity, he was to anoint Jehu king, and Elisha a prophet; the former would wholly overturn the idolatry of Baal, and the latter would carry on the work of God in his stead. This story should moderate our zeal and our complaints, in a time of apostasy, and bring us to a soft and gentle spirit. We also ought confidenty to believe that God has still more faithful servants and children than we imagine; and if future times appear to us in danger of growing worse, God can soon raise a Jehu and other servants of his, who have more spiritual gifts than the present. Yes, O my God! thou wilt not withold thine aid; grant that we may apply for it by diligent prayer!

How beauteous are their feet,
Who stand on Sion's hill,
Who bring salvation on their tongues,
And words of peace reveal!

How charming is their voice,
How sweet their tidings are,
Zion behold thy Saviour King,
He reigns and triumphs here!

FEBRUARY XIX.

Go borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels, borrow not a few. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, bring me yet

a vessel. And he said unto her, there is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Thus saith the Lord, they shall eat, and shall leave thereof. 2 KINGS iv. 3, 6, 43. See also, 1 KINGS xvii. 13, 14. Fear not, &c. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail.

THUS God supplies all, even our temporal wants; he is the Lord that filleth heaven and earth how much more is he not able to fill a single house. His barrel and his cruse shall not fail; it is never empty. Did we but possess faith, instead of resembling that unbelieving lord, who said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? He lived to see it, but died immediately after for this unbelief. Let us therefore trust in the living God, that he can still give us food and gladness in abundance, though we observe every corner empty. But we are yet more obliged to believe, that God will supply our spiritual wants, and fill our empty hearts with the rich oil of his Spirit. Our acknowledged wants are so many empty vessels, which God will fill, if we only place them before him, and not a few of them; for had the woman had more vessels, she would have obtained more oil.

Our God can every want supply,
And fill our hearts with peace,
He gives by cov'nant and by oath,
The riches of his grace.

Hence may we taste unmingled joys,
And live in perfect peace:
We who have known Jehovah's name,
And ventur'd on his grace.

Come, and he'll cleanse our spotted souls,
And wash away our stains,
In the dear fountain that his Son
Pour'd from his dying veins.

FEBRUARY XX.

Whence comest thou, Gehazi? Is it a time to receive money and garments? &c. The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto

thee, and to thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper; as white as snow. 2 KINGS v. 25. 26, 27.

GEHAZI was not of the same disposition as Elisha, who took no present from Naaman, though he had cured him of his leprosy; for running after Naaman, he obtained from him two talents of silver, and two changes of raiments, but God punished him with the leprosy. Nor was he of the same mind with Samuel, of whom the whole congregation witnessed that he had not received a present from any man's hand. O that all judges were like Samuel! enemies to avarice; for such only are qualified to fill the office. But alas! how many receive gifts and pervert judgments. This is infamous, and God will judge them. But how much more offensive is it to see ministers covetous? for these, as Luther says, "are good for nothing. Their care is not a care of souls, but of money, of interest, of tithes." They have the root of all evil in them; and how much evil must come out of them! Lord, preserve us from avarice and an eager desire after riches, and grant that we may be content with what we have; and supply us with judges and ministers, whose hearts are averse from covetousness.

Judges who rule the world by laws,
Will ye despise the righteous cause,
When th' injur'd poor before you stands?
Dare ye condemn the righteous poor,
And let rich sinners 'scape secure
When gold and greatness bribe your hands?

Have ye forgot, or never knew,
That God will judge the judges too?
High in the heav'ns his justice reigns?
Yet you invade the rights of God,
And send your bold decrees abroad,
To bind the conscience in your chains.

FEBRUARY XXI.

Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and

chariots of fire round about Elisha. 2 KINGS vi. 16, 17. See also, Heb. i. 14.

HOWEVER numerous our spiritual and temporal enemies may be, we have a greater number of holy angels around us, who assist in forwarding our salvation. They go in and out with us, attend us by day and by night, at home and on a journey. They assist us in the education and care of our children, and support us in the hour of death. They inspire us with good thoughts, and remind us of what we may have forgotten, of doing this or that, of going there or here, the omission of which might have been hurtful to our souls and bodies. They are a check upon evil angels and wicked men, especially wicked men in power; and were we more attentive to it, we might more clearly discern the service they render us. Lord, grant that all this may awaken us to faith, gratitude, and a holy conversation, since these blessed spirits are always about us; and that we may inculcate the same upon our children; and keep us in all our ways, and also this night by an angel, that the enemy may have no power over us.

Ye sons of men, a feeble race,
Expos'd to every snare,
Come make the Lord your dwelling place.
And try and trust his care.

No ill shall enter where you dwell;
Or, if the plague come nigh,
And sweep the wicked down to hell,
'Twill raise his saints on high.

He'll give his angels charge to keep
Your feet in all their ways:
To watch your pillow while you sleep,
And guard your happy days.

Their hands shall bear you, lest you fall,
And dash against the stones;
Are they not servants at his call,
And sent t' attend his sons?

FEBRUARY XXII.

And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou would bless me indeed and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from

evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested. And the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, &c. (viz. the Rubenites) for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them, because they put their trust in him. 1 CHRON. iv. 10. v. 20.

"SEE," says Luther, "the power of faith." If we prayed more fervently, and trnsted more in our God, he would certainly be intreated of us, and enable us to conquer both our temporal and spiritual enemies. But the victory he bestows must be attributed to him alone, else he will suffer us to relapse, as we may have already experienced. We are anxious about an impending evil, we pray, God hears us, and prevents the evil. O my God! grant me my requests, and suffer no evil to molest me, or to exceed my strength and hurt my soul. Assist us also this night, and in the last night of death, and deliver us from all evil.

Th' Almighty reigns exalted high
O' er all the earth, o'er all the sky:
Tho' clouds and darkness veil his feet,
His dwelling is his mercy-seat.

O ye who love his holy name,
Hate every work of sin and shame;
He guards the souls of all his freinds,
And from the snares of hell defends.

Immortal light, the joys unknown,
Are for the saints in darkness sown:
These glorious deeds shall spring and rise,
And the bright harvest bless our eyes.

FEBRUARY XXIII.

And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if you seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. I CHRON. xxviii. 9

THESE were the last words which David addressed to his son Solomon before his death. In like manner, all

good parents admonish their children, and place before them blessings and curses; for the latter also are necessary as a warning to them. O that we and our children would duly attend to these words. The Lord seeketh and requireth the heart, and not a mere outward shew. A genuine repentance, and thorough change must first take place, and then we shall serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind. And if we thus seek him, he will certainly be found of us; but he will reject those who forsake him, notwithstanding the piety of their parents. Lord, grant that all of us, especially all young persons, and our children, may attend to and believe this, and that we may serve thee willingly with all our heart, and continue faithful unto death, nor deviate from thy paths as Solomon did in his old age.

Let children learn the mighty deeds,
Which God perform'd of old;
Which in our younger days we saw,
And which our fathers told.

Our lips shall tell them to our sons,
And they again to theirs,
That generations yet unborn,
May teach them to their heirs.

Thus shall we learn in God alone
Their hope securely stands,
That they may ne'er forget his works,
But practice his commands.

FEBRUARY XXIV

Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. For all that is in the heaven, and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand it is to make great, and give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. 1 CHRON. xxix. 10, 11, 12, 13.

THUS was David filled with the praises of God, before his latter end, when the people were willing to con-

tribute so greatly to the temple, and he gave the glory to God alone. In like manner we must not extol ourselves on account of our good works, but praise and magnify God, since it is a benefit and a honour to serve the great Jehovah. O my God? grant us to be filled with thy praises, when we draw nigh to the close of life; enable us to repeat the words of David in confidence, strengthen our faith; and O may we rest assured, that thou wilt be our Saviour at the last. Prepare us every day for our latter end, and dispose us to leave the world, praising and glorifying thy name.

The Lord Jehovah reigns,
And royal state maintains;
His head with awful glories crown'd,
Array'd in robes of light,
Begirt with sov'reign might,
And rays of majesty around.

FEBRUARY XXV.

Lord, it is nothing with thee, to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude: O Lord, thou art my God, let no man prevail against thee. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company, that cometh against us: neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. *God's answer* The Lord will be with you. 2 CHRON. xiv. 11. xx. 12, 17.

IF Christians were to pray as faithfully in the distresses of war, as Asa and Jehosaphat did here, the Lord would certainly be with us, and give us the victory. But if we rely upon our own power, wisdom or allies, and instead of having recourse to the counsel and assistance of God, or to prayer, we attempt to command success by our own might and counsel, we shall miscarry and be defeated. And the case is the same in our holy spiritual warfare. Lord, give us grace, that we may not depend upon ourselves in any thing, but in every thing upon Thee the living God, and that we may not be dismayed at the multitude of our spiritual and temporal enemies,

but to continue to pray and trust in Thee: so shall we be ever secure of thy powerful help. Amen.

Upward I lift my eyes,
From God is all my aid,
The God who built the skies,
And earth and nature made,
God is the tow'r to which I fly,
His grace is nigh in ev'ry hour.

FEBRUARY XXVI.

The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you, &c. Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded. They sought him with their whole desire, and he was found of them; and the Lord gave them rest round about. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him. 2 CHRON. xv. 2, 7, 15. xvi. 9.

THESE promises concern us, and should move us always to set the Lord before us, and to seek him with all our heart; he will then surely be found of us all, even the weakest; he will be ever present with us, fight for us, and all our work shall be rewarded. Lord! grant that we may heartily believe this promise, and see it fulfilled in ourselves, that our hands may not be weak, nor grow weary in thy work, that we may seek thee with our whole heart, and receive such strength that we may not, like Asa, to whom these words were spoken, fall back again into unbelief.

Firm and unmov'd are they,
Who rest their souls in God:
Firm as the mount where David dwelt,
Or where the ark abode.

As monntains stood to guard
The city's sacred ground,
So God, and his almighty love,
Embrace his saints around.

What, tho' the Father's rod
Drop a chastising stroke,
Yet lest it woun l their souls too deep,
Its fury shall be broke.

FEBRUARY XXVII.

Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. 2 CHRON. xx. 20.

THUS said Jehosaphat, and so it happened; but when he joined himself with the wicked king Ahaziah, his works were broken, &c. And so we read of Joash, that he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, as long as Jehoiada the priest was living: but after his death he fell off, and having made a wicked alliance, he caused Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, to be put to death before the house of the Lord, for having rebuked him by the command of God. When Zachariah died, he said, *The Lord look upon it, and require it.* And then we read, that the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand, because they (the Israelites) had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. And they executed judgment against Joash; they left him in great distress, and, at length, his own servants conspired against him, and slew him, ch. xxiv 17—25. God still executes the same judgment of retaliation; for when a people forsake him, he forsakes them in return, and then a small army of the enemy may overpower them. Lord! grant that we may ever believe in Thee, and in thy prophets, and not fall off at the last; so shall we be secure of protection against all our spiritual and temporal enemies, and instead of falling under thy displeasure, we shall enjoy thy blessing.

Let sinners take their course,
And chuse the road to death;
But in the worship of my God,
I'll spend my daily breath.

Thou wilt regard my cries,
O my eternal God!
While sinners perish in surprise,
Beneath thine angry rod.

FEBRUARY XXVIII.

Uzziah sought God in the days of Zechariah, &c. and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. (*The same is said of Jotham his son*, he became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.) And his name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong; but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. *So we read of Hezekiah, that* his heart was lifted up, when he was magnified in the sight of all nations. 2 CHRON. xxvi. 5, 15, 16. xxvii. 6. xxxii. 23.

O HOW necessary is it for the faithful, especially for young persons of piety, to pray for perseverance, that they may not cease to be religious, when their truly pious parents or teachers die? If we steadfastly seek the Lord, and prepare all our ways before him, he will give us prosperity in all things, and render us mighty against the enemies of our souls and bodies;—but then it more especially behoves us to watch, lest our hearts be lifted up, and we fall into destruction? Lord? preserve us by thy grace from this evil? Grant, that we may ever seek thee; and the higher we rise, and the more grace thou givest unto us, the more we may humble ourselves.

Let every tongue thy goodness speak,
Thou Sovereign Lord of all;
Thy strengthening hands uphold the weak,
And raise the poor that fall

The Lord supports our tott'ring days,
And guides our giddy youth;
Holy and just are all his ways,
And all his words are truth.

MARCH I.

And when Manasseh was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the Lord God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew, that the Lord he was God. And he took away the strange gods. 2 CHRON. xxxiii. 12, 13, 15.

THUS God is entreated of the greatest sinners, and receives them into favour; pardons their sins, and delivers them from temporal distress, if they can only penitently

confess their sins, and humble themselves before God, not desiring merely to be delivered from their temporal distress, but chiefly from the distresses of sin, with resolutions of amendment, like Manasseh, who took away the idol deities, when God had relieved him in his affliction. But there are many who will not humble themselves in their distress before God, as Ahab and Manasseh did, or they return to their former sins after their deliverance. God will afflict these more heavily. He observes narrowly whether we humble ourselves before him; for he said of Ahab, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Lord, grant that our necessities and thy help may move us to repent and humble ourselves before Thee. Soften the hard heart, preserve us from all our sins, grant that we may put away all strange gods, and not provoke thy dreadful anger.

Consider all my sorrows, Lord,
And thy deliv'rance send:
My soul for thy salvation faints,
When will my troubles end?

MARCH II.

In the eighth year of his reign, while he (*King Josiah*) was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant, which are written in this book. 2 CHRON. xxxiv. 3, 31.

O THAT the world abounded with such princes! The virtues which were possible in this young king, under the law, are much more possible now under the gospel. So that no man, no young man, no king can excuse himself. But most men are of opinion, that so much piety is rendered needless by the gospel of Christ, that we need not now be so rigorous; yet we read, that the design of the gospel was to teach us to live righteously in this present

world. The more we are devoted to the gospel, the more holy we shall be, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Lord, assist us and our children in keeping all the words of thy covenant, and raise up kings and princes, who may seek thee with all their heart.

Children in years and knowledge young,
Your parents' hope, your parents' joy,
Attend the counsels of my tongue,
Let pious thoughts your minds employ.

MARCH III.

The eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, *(from building the house of God.)* We had spoken unto the king, saying, the hand of our God is upon all them for good, that seek him. So we fasted and besought our God for this, and he was entreated of us; and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. EZRA v. 5. viii. 22, 23, 31.

WHEN we are building a spiritual temple, and edifying our own souls and the souls of others, if our enemies, from within and without, attempt to hinder us, we must have recourse to prayer, the eye and the hand of God will be upon us, and our enemies, instead of hindering, will forward our work. Therefore let us go on comfortably and indefatigably in labour and in prayer; the Lord will not cause his work to cease. Lord, grant us faith, fidelity, and diligence in our work of edification, that we grow not weary, but continue in prayer, and then experience thy protection, which will secure us against such as lay in wait to hinder us from building thine house.

Behold the sure foundation stone,
Which God in Zion lays,
To build our heav'nly hopes upon,
And his eternal praise.

Chosen of God, to sinners dear,
And saints adore the name,
They build their whole salvation here,
Nor shall they suffer shame.

MARCH IV.

We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, &c. Remember the word, that thou commandedst thy servant Moses *(when God promised, if they turned unto him, to bring them back unto their own country, though they were cast out unto the uttermost parts of the heaven.)* O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man *(The King.)* NEHEM. i. 7, 8, 11.

THUS Nehemiah confessed his own sins, and the sins of the people, that they had dealt very corruptly; for sin is indeed a corruption of the heart. But he humbly pleaded the divine promise, and besought God, that he might find mercy in the sight of the king, and the Lord inclined the king's heart, and he asked him, Why he was sad? And Nehemiah prayed again to the God of heaven, before he made his request to the king. Lord! assist us, when we have sinned, in humbling ourselves, and grant that we may fear thy name; of ourselves we can do nothing, even to our own satisfaction; our best endeavours are little better than impotent will and desire. Grant that we may do all things with prayer, and therein lay hold of thy promises. So shall we find favour with Thee and man, and thy work will prosper in and by us.

To God I cry'd with mournful voice,
I sought his gracious ear,
In the sad day, when troubles rose,
And filled the night with fear.

MARCH V.

Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth, whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? ESTH. iv. 14.

How great was the faith of Mordecai, and the self-denial of Esther! for she sent him word that they should fast for three days, and "so," said she, "will I go in

unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." The Lord helped them, and Haman, their worst and most insolent enemy at court, was hanged on the same gallows which he had erected for Mordecai. Thus pride goeth before a fall. Great men should well remember this; and those true Christians, who are in high stations, should strive and be concerned for the kingdom of God, and consider that as the reason of their exaltation. If they neglect this, woe be to them! But God has other means in store to save his church.—Prayer and supplication are our spiritual armour. "It is good," saith Luther, "that God hath not left the care of his church wholly to the court; for Satan would then not suffer a soul to escape." Lord, be thou our protector, in all our present and future, spiritual and temporal distresses.

Now I'm convinc'd the Lord is kind
To men of heart sincere;
Yet once my foolish thoughts repin'd,
And border'd on despair.

MARCH VI.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Job i. 21. ii. 10.

Every event which befals us, whether it be from men or other creatures, is to be received as coming from God, and it becomes us not to vent reproaches and impatient language against men. This is acting like the dog, who bites the stone which is thrown at him. We should immediately recollect the design of God. He means to awaken the careless to repentance, and to cleanse and purify the converted. Examine, therefore, thyself this evening, what the intention of God is with respect to thee, and from what evil he means to deliver thee. The present judgments and plagues of the world may lead to the same reflection. Lord, awaken us thoroughly by all thy judgments, and cleanse us from all sin. Grant us repentance, faith, and patience, that, as we receive so much

good from thee, we may be prepared to receive evil, and suffer thy designs towards us to take place, and that we may arrive at such a degree of piety as to praise thee, like Job, whether thou givest or takest away.

Naked as from the earth we came,
And crept to life at first,
We to the earth return again,
And mingle with the dust.

The dear delights we here enjoy,
And fondly call our own,
Are but short favours borrow'd now,
To be repaid anon.

MARCH VII.

He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. (*Thus we read* Prov. xxiv. 16. A just man falleth seven times (*into misfortune*) and riseth up again.) Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee. Job v. 19. x. 12, 13. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. 1 Sam. vii. 12.

My God, thou hast also helped me hitherto, and delivered me out of more than six troubles; thou wilt not forsake me in any present or future affliction, nor suffer it to exceed my strength, which is but very feeble; thou knowest how frail, and weak, and helpless, I am. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. O visit me now and hereafter, and look upon me in the hour of death, and preserve and finally deliver me. And though thou shouldst hide thyself, yet grant that I may ever know and feel that thou, in mercy, thinkest upon me.

To God, the only wise,
Our Saviour and our King,
Let all the saints below the skies,
Their humble praises bring.

'Tis his almighty love,
His counsel and his care,
Preserves us safe from sin and death,
And ev'ry hurtful snare.

He will present our souls,
Unblemish'd and complete,
Before the glory of his face,
With joys divinely great.

MARCH VIII.

In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man: to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. Job xxxiii. 15, 16, 17, 29, 30.

Thus God striveth to awaken the children of men, by alarming them with terrors within, or sickness without, so that in the great day every one will be left without excuse. If ever thou hast experienced, O man! any fear or terror of conscience, or bodily pain, recollect the meaning of it. Turn to the Lord with all thy heart, confess thy sins penitently, and call upon Christ, who, according to the 24th verse, hath found a ransom; so will the Lord also be gracious unto thee, and deliver thee from going down to the pit. O my Saviour, keep me from pride, and spare my soul. Grant that thy terrors, and my bodily pains, may draw me nearer and nearer to thee; that I may rest in thy atonement this night, but more especially the last night of my life, and may depart from hence in peace.

Let everlasting glories crown
Thy head, my Saviour, and my Lord:
Thy hands have brought salvation down,
And writ the blessings in thy word.

What if we search the globe around,
And search from Britain to Japan,
There shall be no religion found,
So just to God, so safe for man!

MARCH IX.

Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish by the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Psalm ii. 12.

These words are applicable to our days, for libertinism in religion which rejects Christ, was never arrived at such a pitch as at present, and one is perpetually seduced by another. This is the fountain of all sin: for whoso doth not receive Christ, may commit any sin, which is out of

the reach of human punishments. The wrath of God is kindled against these, and unless they repent, they will perish. This is that capital sin which God punishes to this day, when men attempt to dethrone God and Christ. Some are ashamed to pronounce the name of God: they will indeed sometimes use the indefinite terms, Heaven and Providence. To Christ they seem to be absolute strangers; or if they confess the Christian faith, they admit Christ perhaps within their lips, but not into their hearts; some worldly gain, or temporal honour, or heathen morality, is dearer than Christ crucified, who is not yet become to them the power and wisdom of God; before this can happen they must consider themselver as weak and foolish men, which is not agreeable to a proud heart.

Rulers and kings unite
To form a vain design,
Against the Lord their pow'rs unite,
Against his Christ they join.

Be wise, ye rulers now,
And worship at his throne;
With trembling joy, ye people, bow
To God's eternal Son.

MARCH X.

The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. PSAL. vi 10. ix. 10, 11, 19.

WHOEVER would receive comfort from these words, must first be sensible of his poverty and misery, and humbly acknowledge his sins; and feeling nothing in himself but indigence and unworthiness; he must come with all his poverty to the rich Saviour, and ask his forgiveness. The Lord will supply all his wants, however great his poverty and misery may be, and protect him especially in time of need. And he will not forsake nor forget him; he may hope in him, and hope for the best

from him; though a suspicious heart always apprehends the worst. Neither his hope, nor his prayer, nor even a sigh will be lost. O my God, grant me faith, that I may say, the Lord heareth my supplication, the Lord receiveth my prayer. Praised be God, who hath not rejected my prayer, nor turned away his goodness from me, but is my protector and my hope.

God hears when dust and ashes speak,
He pities all our groans;
He saves us for his mercy's sake,
And heals our broken bones.

MARCH XI.

Thou has seen it, for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee, thou art the helper of the fatherless. In the Lord put I my trust; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth. *God's answer:* For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy; now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. *And then the language of faith is*, I have trusted in thy merey, my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. PSALM x. 14. xi. 1. xii. 2, 6. xiii. 6.

LORD, grant that we may draw comfort from the whole of these promises; that however the flock may be disturbed by enemies from without, or our souls from those within, we may firmly believe that thou wilt arise, and provide help for the whole church and for our souls; so that our hearts may trust in thy mercy, and rejoice in thy salvation. And as these words were very comfortable to a dying person, so great that we also may hope and trust in thee alone, and abundantly experience thy mercy.

Why do the men of malice rage,
And say with foolish pride,
The God of heaven will ne'er engage
To fight on Zion's side?

But thou for ever art our Lord,
And powerful is thine hand;
As when the heathen felt thy sword,
And perish'd from thy land.

MARCH XII.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage; wait I say, on the Lord. PSAL. xxvii. 1, 5, 13, 14.

THIS is a word of comfort in the present time of spiritual and temporal judgments. If the enemies of truth, or all the evil spirits combined, endeavour to obscure the light of God's word, or to weaken our faith, in order to make us weary in the work of God; yet the Lord will be our light and our salvation, and the strength of our life; so that we need not fear any thing, even though our enemies amount to an host. For he will hide us in his pavilion in the evil time of war, or other judgments, and assist us in every inward and outward affliction. We must, therefore, learn to wait on the Lord.

One privilege my heart desires;
O grant me an abode
Among the churches of the saints,
The temples of my God!
Should friends and kindred, near and dear,
Leave me to want or die,
My God would make my life his care,
And all my need supply.
My fainting flesh had died with grief,
Had not my soul believ'd
To see thy grace provide relief:
Nor was my hope deceiv'd.

MARCH XIII.

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me, deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in secret of thy presence from the pride of man. PSA. xxxi. 1, 2, 5, 19, 20.

EVERY good Christian may apply this promise to himself, and believe, that if he trusts in God before the sons of men, or confesses his faith and hope before the world, the Lord will never suffer him to be confounded in that for which he hopes, and will manifest his great goodness to him, though it should be hid from him for a time.—Yes, Lord Jesus! I trust in thee, thou art my strong rock, and my house of defence. And as, in the hour of death, thou didst commit thy spirit into the hands of thy Father, so do I, this evening, commit mine into thy hands; and hope to do so at the hour of death. Do thou hide me in thy tabernacle, and thy secret pavilion, and save me by thy cross and passion.

Into thine hand, O God of truth!
My spirit I commit;
Thou hast redeem'd my soul from death,
And sav'd me from the pit.

MARCH XIV.

I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him from all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate. PSALM xxxiv. 4, 6, 7, 15, 19, 22.

DAVID here praises and extols the power of the Lord, who heard him when he poured out his supplications, and delivered him from all his fear and distress. And his design was, that other unhappy men might comfort themselves, and believe that the Lord will hear them, encamp round about them, and deliver them, for his eyes and ears are likewise directed towards them. Should their sins render them backward to believe this, yet if they have recourse, in faith and confidence, to Jesus, they are justified, invested with the righteousness of Christ, and are delivered from the load of guilt. There is not a sin

recorded against them, however infirm they may be, for it is written, "none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." So that they may depend upon comfort and peace.

I'll bless the Lord from day to day,
How good are all his ways!
Ye humble souls, that use to pray,
Come teach my lips to praise.

MARCH XV.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath, fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. PSALM XXXVII. 7, 8, 9.

THIS inheritance of the earth is mentioned five times in this very psalm, ver. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34. We should therefore, duly attend to it, and our Saviour enforces it, when he says, Matt. v. 5. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Wicked, contentious, insolent men will not arrive at this inheritance, though they should flourish like a green bay tree. This should beget in us meekness towards our enemies, lest we fall into sin: we have more reason to pity them, than to complain; for according to the tenth verse, "yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be;" for he that attacks the servants, the children, and the cause of God, and carries on the attack with violence runs headlong into ruin, and his fall is at hand. But of the righteous it is said, ver. 31. "The law of God is in his heart, and none of his steps shall slide." Therefore let us wait with patience and resignation.

Then let me make the Lord my trust,
And practice all that's good:
So shall I dwell among the just,
And he'll provide me food.

MARCH XVI.

They are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions, make me not the reproach of the foolish. Hear my prayer O Lord, and give ear unto my cry, hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, &c. Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as know thy salvation, say continually, the Lord be magnified. But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me. PSAL. xxxix. 6, 7, 8, 12. xl. 16, 17.

EARTHLY minds think only of amassing wealth, and endeavour to establish themselves here; but the faithful consider themselves only as pilgrims, travelling through, and lodging at an inn, but they are citizens yonder, and therefore look for eternal life in their heavenly country, anxious only to obtain remission of sins; and relying for salvation, rest, and peace upon Christ, rid themselves of much vain disquiet, and glorify the Lord. Assist us, Lord, that we may seek Thee supremely, love thy salvation, and praise Thee as the God of grace.

See the vain race of mortals move,
Like shadow's o'er the plain,
They rage and strive, desire and love,
But all the noise is vain.

This mortal life decays apace,
How soon the bubble's broke!
Adam, and all his num'rous race,
Are vanity and smoke.

MARCH XVII.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty; with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. PSAL xlv. 3, 4, 5. xlvi 1, 11.

SUCH is the prayer and the comfort of the faithful when the enemies attack the church and city of God,

or harass their souls: when they study to darken truth and equity, and when spiritual and temporal judgments break in. Our defender will certainly gird his sword upon his thigh, in the present times, and preserve his truth, his city and our souls. He will still provide many sharp arrows, many faithful labourers, and will in the midst of his judgments, be our help and trust, that we need not fear though the earth should be removed. Lord, grant us faith, and much incense for prayer, for it is now high time to pray.

Now be my heart inspir'd to sing
The glories of my Saviour King,
Jesus, the Lord, how heav'nly fair
His form! how bright his beauties are!

Dress Thee in arms, most mighty Lord,
Gird on the terror of thy sword,
In Majesty and glory ride,
With truth and meekness at thy side.

MARCH XVIII.

God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death. *He saith*, Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. PSAL. xlviii. 3, 14. l. 15, 22.

God is still the refuge of the faithful, and guides and leads them as his children, and delivers them out of all their adversity, when they call upon him; therefore no particular distress is mentioned. He desires their praise, and furnishes them with materials for it; but secure and thoughtless men are anxious only about their bodily distresses, whereas they should reflect penitently upon their sins, and ask forgiveness. It is for this purpose God inflicts temporal calamities upon them; which having answered the desired end, he will also remove. As for those who think lightly of sin, God addresses them, ver. 21. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set

them in order before thine eyes," and if thou continuest impenitent, I will tear thee in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver. How many are suddenly snatched away, both by sea and land! The mariner fires a signal of distress, but is carried off by the storm and waves, before any succour can reach him. Lord, grant that our calamities may awaken us to repentance, and, through thy Spirit, be the means of saving our souls.

Far as thy name is known
The world declares thy praise;
The saints, O Lord, before thy throne,
Their songs of honour raise.

Oft have our fathers told,
Our eyes have often seen,
How well our God secures the fold
Where his own sheep have been.

MARCH XIX.

Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength: but trusted in the abundance of his riches (*or other things*), and strengthened himself in his wickedness. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God, I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. *Therefore*, hear my prayer, O God, &c. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul; they have not set God before them. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. PSAL. lii. 7, 8. liv. 2, 3. lv. 17, 22.

WHEN the proud enemies of the truth, within and without the church, set themselves against us, our comfort is, that they trust in themselves, have not God before their eyes, do not pray, and indeed cannot, whilst they are so wickedly employed. But, O Lord! let us pray the more, and cry unto Thee evening, morning, and at noon, yea, let us cast all our burden upon Thee, and suffer none of it to lie upon ourselves; then wilt thou hear us, and provide us rest, however Satan, our own evil hearts, or wicked men, may storm and rage.

I saw the wicked rise,
And felt my heart repine,
While haughty fools, with scornful eyes,
In robes of honour shine.

On what a slippery steep,
The thoughtless wretches go;
And O that dreadful fiery deep,
That waits their fall below!

MARCH XX.

In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back; this I know, for God is for me. Be merciful unto me, O God! be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge. Because of his strength will I wait upon thee; for God is my defence. Through God shall we do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies. *Therefore*, hear my cry, O God, &c. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. PSAL. lvi. 4, 9. lvii. 1. lix. 9. lx. 12. lxi. 1, 2, 3.

IN all our distresses within or without, we must have recourse to the word of God, we should highly prize it, arm ourselves therewith continually, hold fast by God, and call upon him, against the art and power of all our spiritual and temporal enemies; so shall we know in our hearts, that God is our defence and our gracious God. We must despair of ourselves, but not of God; through him we may, and shall, do valiantly. He will tread down our enemies, and lead us to an high rock, and be our trust, and a strong tower fron all our enemies.

My God! in whom are all the springs
Of boundless love and grace unknown,
Hide me beneath thy spreading wings,
'Till the dark cloud is overblown.

My heart is fix'd; my song shall raise
Immortal honours to thy name;
Awake, my tongue, to sound his praise,
My tongue, the glory of my frame.

MARCH XXI.

O Thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. O Lord, make no tarrying. PSAL. lxv. 2, 3. lxvi. 18. lxix. 3. lxx. 5.

If God hear our prayer, surely we ought to acknowledge it. He will hear our prayer, and not act contrary to the glory of his name. But the heavy load of guilt must first be removed from our hearts; if we make humble confession, and do not wilfully engage in any iniquity, nor reserve a sin to ourselves, and depend on the atoning sacrifice, he certainly will hear, insomuch that we may, like a cartain pious minister, always conclude our prayer with these words, "Praised be God, for he will not reject my prayer." But we must not only pray, but wait, and persevere in prayer: for Jesus was weary of his crying, his throat was dried, but he thereby atoned for our impatience, and acquired merit, through the power of which we may persevere to the end. Nothing will exceed our strength, and we shall be, at last, saved with complete and free salvation.

Now shall my solemn vows be paid
To that almighty pow'r
That heard the long requests I made
In my distressful hour.

My lips and cheerful heart prepare
To make his mercies known;
Come ye, who fear my God, and hear
The wonders he has done.

MARCH XXII.

For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. God is the judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain, I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters. Thou leadest thy people like a flock. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath: for he remembered that they were but flesh. PSAL. lxxiv. 12 lxxv. 7. lxxvi. 10. lxxvii. 11, 19, 20. lxxviii. 36, 38.

GOD is still the same, as he was of old, a God doing wonderful works; and he is the king and judge, who abaseth one and exalteth another, as we may even now observe, if we but attend to it, and give him the praise.

And when men rage against him, and rob him of his glory, he will arm himself against them. Let us think of his former wondrous works, and his mysterious dispensations; let us honour him in our hearts, not flatter him with our mouths, and lie, as many do in confessing their sins. Our God continues still to punish such hypocrisy, though he does not stir up all his wrath.

Great God, how oft did Israel prove
By turns thine anger and thy love:
There in a glass our hearts may see,
How fickle and how false they be!

Their prayers and vows before him rise
As flattering words or solemn lies,
While their rebellious temples prove
False to his cov'nant and his love.

MARCH XXIII.

Turn us again, O God of Hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. Behold and visit this vine: let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, &c. That men may know that thou whose name is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth. PSAL. lxxx. 7, 17. lxxxi. 13, 14. lxxxiii. 18.

THE vineyard of God is his church, which is continually infested by enemies from within and from without, and great judgments both spiritual and temporal are gone forth against them. The spirtiual are the most dangerous, but they are little regarded. The chief of these judgments are unfaithful shepherds and labourers, who may be well called rapacious wolves; these waste, and burn, and cut down the vineyard, like wild boars; and because this is not attended to, God comes down with temporal judgments, with war, famine, pestilence, and other plagues. Would we be delivered from these, and enjoy peace, we must become obedient to God and repent, acknowledging that all our help proceeds from him, and that he alone is the Most High. This is the surest road to peace. But if we attribute any thing to ourselves, or rob him of his honour, and continue disobedient, then all prospects of peace will vanish away.

Lord, when thy vine in Canaan grew,
Thou wast its strength and glory too!
Attack'd in vain by all its foes,
Till the fair branch of promise rose.

Fair branch, ordain'd of old to shoot
From David's stock, from Jacob's root,
Himself a noble vine, and we
The lesser branches of the tree.

'Tis thy own Son, and he shall stand
Girt with thy strength at thy right hand;
Thy first-born Son, adorn'd and blest
With power and grace above the rest,

O for his sake attend our cry!
Shine on thy churches lest they die;
Turn us to thee, thy love restore,
We shall be sav'd and sigh no more.

MARCH XXIV.

The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease. Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. PSAL. lxxxiv. 11, 12. lxxxv. 4. lxxxvi. 3, 4, 5.

O MY God, be thou also my sun, illumine me, and make my darkness light, that all the gloomy shades of ignorance may be dispelled. Be thou my impenetrable shield, to cover and protect me. Who then shall be able to overcome me? Thou wilt not suffer me to want any good thing, but wilt make me happy, because I put my trust in thee. And as thou hast heretofore been gracious unto thy people, so abate thy displeasure now manifested in these judgments, and comfort us again with thy help, grace, and goodness, that so we may be crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies; for thy compassion is great to all them who call upon thee, and consequently great towards me, who am now thy suppliant.

Salvation is for ever nigh
The souls who fear and trust the Lord;
And grace, descending from on high,
Fresh hopes of glory shall afford.

Mercy and truth on earth are met,
Since Christ the Lord came down from heav'n
By his obedience so compleat
Justice is pleas'd, and sin forgiv'n.

MARCH XXV.

For I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defence: and the holy One of Israel is our king. PSAL, lxxxix. 2, 15, 16, 17, 18.

THESE are comfortable promises concerning Christ's kingdom of grace, in which we, who are true belivers, are included. But mark, every promise flows from grace and truth. By his grace he forgives us abundantly, yea, he daily pardons all our sins; by his truth, he punctually and faithfully performs all his promises, and leads us into the true and right path. And we, his people, shall be blessed and shout for joy, and walk in the light of his countenance, which will dispel the darkness of unbelief and ignorance. And we shall daily rejoice in his name, and be exalted in his righteousness: for his name is an ointment poured out upon us, and a strong fort, and his righteousness is our most glorious ornament. He only is our boast, our shield, our king, in and by whom we are strengthened against all our enemies. Grant, O Lord, that we may truly believe these glorious promises, and daily see them fulfilled in us.

My never-ceasing songs shall show
The mercies of the Lord;
And make succeeding ages know
How faithful is his word.

MARCH XXVI.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and florishing. To shew, that the Lord is upright; he is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him. Judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it. PSAL. xcii. 12, 13, 14, 15. xciv. 15.

THE Lord will certainly perform this glorious promise; and the faithful should make use of it in their old age to strengthen and to stimulate them; that they may continue to labour and to pray, and to testify the faithfulness of God in their life and conversation, and that there is no unrighteousness in him. For though the enemy may reject their testimony, and attempt to darken righteousness or the divine truth, yet right will be right, truth will remain truth, and judgment will the sooner be brought to light, so that all the upright in heart will follow it, and find it nourishing to them, whilst others endeavour to feed upon husks and bones, or shells and chaff.

The plants of grace shall ever live,
Nature decays, but grace must thrive;
Time, that doth all things else impair,
Still makes them flourish fat and fair.

Happy the church, thou sacred place,
The seat of thy Creator's grace;
Thine holy courts are his abode;
Thou earthly palace of our God.

Thy walls are strength, and at thy gates
A guard of heav'nly warriors waits.
Nor shall thy deep foundations move,
Fix'd on his counsels, and his love.

MARCH XXVII.

In the day when I call, answer me speedily. Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee. PSAL. cii. 2, 13, 14, 15, 28.

GOD hears our prayer as soon as presented, but we perceive it not immediately; so that we are obliged to pray the more fervently: and upon this earnest persevering prayer God hastens his succour, and it is the forerunner of speedy help. In all our distresses he will certainly assist us, and his whole church, and propagate his gospel. It is time; for his servants are now longing, and pray that Zion may be built. The promises of the farther extension of the kingdom of God, are more manifest now than before, and therefore we pray more confidently for that blessing, than if there were no hopes of amendment. This is written for generations to come, for the seed of the servants of God shall be blessed.

Hear me, O God, nor hide thy face,
But answer lest I die:
Hast thou not built a throne of grace
To hear when sinners cry?

Thou wilt arise, and shew thy face,
Nor will my Lord delay
Beyond th' appointed hour of grace
That long expected day.

Let Zion and her sons rejoice,
Behold the promised hour;
Her God hath heard her mourning voice,
And comes t' exalt his power.

Her dust and ruins that remain,
Are precious in our eyes:
These ruins shall be built again,
And all that dust shall arise.

The Lord shall raise Jerusalem,
And stand in glory there;
Nations shall bow before his throne,
And kings attend with fear.

MARCH XXVIII.

They soon forget his works, they waited not for his counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry; and he remembered them for his covenant. PSAL. cvi. 13, 14, 15, 44, 45.

In times of extraordinary calamity and distress, we must not forget the former works of God, but remember how often he hath assisted us. We must not seek counsel here and there, but wait for his counsel; for even the children of God may advise us to that which is not the counsel of God. A certain person was in great anxiety about an important matter which he was to undertake, and all his Christian friends advised him to it; but the words, "they waited for HIS counsel," made so lively an impression upon him, that he waited for the counsel of God, and this conducted him happily and safely, though in a manner different from the expectations of his friends. Nor should we wantonly lust after this or that, but be content with God in all things, else, like the Israelites, we may obtain our request, but it may bring leanness into our souls, to our disquiet and chastisement. However, God will look upon real distress, and infallibly succour us.

God of eternal love,
How fickle are our ways?
And yet how oft did Israel prove
The constancy of grace!

They saw the wonders wrought,
And then thy praise they sung:
But soon thy works of pow'r forgot,
And murmur'd with their tongue.

Yet when they mourn'd their faults,
He hearken'd to their groans,
Brought his own cov'nant to his thoughts,
And call'd them still his sons.

Their names were in his book,
He sav'd them from their foes;
Oft he chastis'd but ne'er forsook
The people that he chose.

MARCH XXIX.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. PSAL. CX. 3 CXI. 6, 7.

When Christ by his death and resurrection overcame all his enemies, he merited an eternal righteousness, and therewith adorned his people, that they might have peace and power to bring him a free-will offering. The victory of his glorious gospel shall produce children like the dew of the morning. View the countless and pearly drops of morning dew, and hear with pleasure that the universal church of Jesus shall be equally numerous. He will do great acts, conquer his enemies, and convert them into friends. This he has done, and will continue to do; for his words and works are truth, and are done in faithfulness to his promises. Every thing will be fulfilled, but we must learn to wait, for Christ himself must wait till God shall have put all enemies under his feet. Lord, we beseech thee fulfil this promise; may millions of children be born unto thee; let us by thy victory conquer all things, and wait patiently for thy salvation in life, and pleasures for evermore after death.

Thus the eternal Father spake
To Christ the Son, Ascend and sit
At my right hand, till I shall make
Thy foes submissive at thy feet.

From Zion shall thy word proceed,
Thy word, the sceptre in thy hand,
Shall make the hearts of rebels bleed,
And bow their wills to thy command.

That day shall shew thy power is great,
When saints shall flock with willing minds,
And sinners crowd thy temple gate
Where holiness in beauty shines.

O blessed pow'r! O glorious day!
What a large vict'ry shall ensue!
And converts, who thy grace obey,
Exceed the drops of morning dew.

MARCH XXX.

Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased. O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid, thou hast loosed my bonds. The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me. They compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord, I will

destroy them, Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but the Lord helped me, the Lord is my strength. PSAL. cxv. 3. cxvi. 16. cxviii. 6, 11, 13, 14.

IF we give the glory to God alone, distrust ourselves, and call upon him, then he will provide every good thing for us, and create in us such a faith, that we shall speak and testify of him, though men should molest us. We may repeat the declaration, "I am thy servant, I am thy servant." If we have had, or still have, faithful parents, let these words be our comfort, as they were that of a faithful minister, when in his exile he was obliged to leave his pious mother upon her death-bed. Grant, O Lord, that we may believe thee to be present with us, and not be afraid of men, and though they or the evil spirits should compass us about like bees, yet may we, in thy name, and in imitation of thee, destroy them; and though they thrust sore at us, may not fall; for thou art our helper and our strength. All believers, especially all faithful teachers have this comfort, and hence Luther called the 118th psalm his psalm.

What shall I render to my God
For all his kindness shown?
My feet shall visit thine abode,
My songs address thy throne.

MARCH XXXI.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgments have I laid before me. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. PSAL. cxix. 9, 18, 29, 30, 33.

THE old and the young cannot live irreproachably, without taking heed to the word of God; if they depart from that, they soon fall into error and vice, to their own ruin. But would they make it their rule, then they must study it thoroughly; which cannot be done, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, for which they must diligently pray. For if David considered his eyes as

shut, how much more should we consider ours so, and pray, "Open thou mine eyes," &c. He who doth not fervently pray thus, is still blind, and hath not an eye, even though he should be deep in theological learning, and esteemed a profound divine. Lord, grant that we may see the wonders of thy law and thy gospel, and turn us out of the wrong way. Let thy judgments be always before us, as our guides, that we may choose the narrow path of truth, and stedfastly walk in it to the end: for this was David's request, throughout this long psalm.

How shall the young secure their hearts,
And guard their lives from sin?
Thy word the choicest rules imparts
To keed the conscience clean.

Thy precepts make me truly wise,
I hate the sinner's road;
I hate my own vain thoughts that rise,
But love thy law, my God.

APRIL I.

I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts. I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. PSAL. cxix, 45, 52, 59, 60.

WE never walk at liberty, but when we regulate ourselves by the word and precepts of God; then we enjoy a quiet and cheerful conscience in Christ. And though the judgments which befal the world create a turbulent appearance, yet we are comforted in considering the past judgments of God, how he protects his own against their enemies, and turns every thing in the end to the benefit of his church. He will continue to do this, if we only take heed to our ways, whenever we are chastised; and the moment we perceive ourselves deviating, turn back our feet to his testimonies, and make haste and delay not to keep his commandments; he will turn to us, and give us speedy succour. Assist us, Lord, in walking at liberty in thy ways, according to thy word, and in turning our feet without delay to thy testimonies.

The starry heav'ns thy rule obey,
The earth maintains her place:
And there thy servants, night and day,
Thy skill and power express.

But still thy law and gospel, Lord,
Have lessons more divine;
Not earth stands firmer than thy word,
Nor stars so nobly shine.

These testimonies of thy grace,
I set before mine eyes;
Thence I derive my daily strength,
And there my comfort lies.

If once I wander from thy path,
And think upon their ways,
Then turn my feet to thy commands,
And shew thy pardoning grace.

APRIL II.

This I had, because I kept thy precepts. Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have said, that I would keep thy words. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments. Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments. PSAL. cxix. 56, 57, 72, 103, 62, 161.

O how hearty and fervent was David's love and longing after the word of God! Those who relish the husks of worldly wisdom better than the word of God, are unhappy, in the midst of their knowledge, grandeur, and affluence. But even the faithful have reason to be ashamed, to ask forgiveness, and to warm and kindle their cold hearts this evening, with the same flame that animated David. O my God, pardon our negligence of thy word, and this evening revive our love and desire of it; give us a true and constant appetite to it, that it may become our perpetual food and defence against all our enemies, and that we may not hunt after the husks of the world, worldly lusts and riches. Let thy word be dearer to us than gold, and sweeter than honey: let us meditate upon it day and night, and return thee our hearty thanks for it.

O how I love thy holy law!
'Tis daily my delight;
And thence my meditations draw
Divine advice by night.

Am I a stranger, or at home,
'Tis my perpetual feast;
Not honey dropping from the comb,
So much allures the taste.

APRIL III.

Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me, that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Quicken me after thy loving kindness, so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth. I am thine, save me, for I have sought thy precepts. PSAL. cxix. 67, 71, 75, 88, 94.

BEFORE man is truly humbled, he is full of error and folly, and is not yet arrived at true wisdom, however learned and philosophical he may be; for "wisdom," says Solomon, "is with the lowly." If David stood in need of humiliation, and confessed the justice of God's judgments and chastisements, and even thanked God for them, how earnestly ought we to pray for David's disposition, and to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us; for he giveth grace to the humble, that with filial confidence they may rest assured of his help. Yes, O my God, I am thine, thy reconciled, though unworthy child, and thy servant; assist me in seeking thy commandments, grant me power to fulfil them, and preserve me in a perpetual state of humility.

I know thy judgments, Lord, are right,
Though they may seem severe;
The sharpest sufferings I endure
Flow from thy faithful care.

When I confess'd my wand'ring ways,
Thou heardst my soul complain;
Grant me the teachings of thy grace,
Or I shall stray again.

My heart was fashion'd by thy hand,
My service is thy due:
O make thy servant understand
The duties he must do.

APRIL IV.

Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant, and teach me thy statutes; they are my counsellors. PSAL. cxix. 104, 105, 132, 135, 24.

HE who doth not strictly conform himself to God's word, and make that his counsellor, will not become wise, nor possess the prudence of the just, nor the wisdom which cometh from above, however great his natural understanding, or however extensive his knowledge. He will always mistake the counsel of God, and follow his own lusts, or imaginations, or take other foolish men as his counsellors, and so walk on in total darkness;—but, if he would become enlightened by the word, he must apply to God in prayer, that he may make his face to shine upon him, and turn to him with grace, salvation light and life. O my God, turn to me this evening, in grace as thou hast done frequently, and let thy word be a shining light in all my ways, that I may become truly wise, and not fall into any error or darkness.

Let all the heathen writers join
To form one perfect book,
Great God, if once compared with thine
How mean their writings look!

Not the most perfect rules they gave
Could shew one sin forgiv'n
Nor lead a step beyond the grave;
But thine conduct to heaven.

My heart with sacred rev'rence hears
The threat'nings of thy word,
My flesh with holy trembling hears
The judgments of the Lord.

APRIL V.

I cried with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord, I will keep thy statutes. Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee. I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments. PSAL. cxix. 145, 168, 176.

THE word of God should always be connected with prayer; for why is it, that many hear and read it, without being the better? they do not pray in faith for a blessing. We must, like David, pray with the utmost fervor, that we may understand and keep the word of God, and bring forth fruit; for a real christian has nothing so much at heart, as that he may always act up to the word and will of God: his prayer is, Lord, let my footsteps be sure, according to thy word, and let nothing contrary to thy law have dominion over me, either in my doctrine or practice. If this prayer be granted, great will be our peace; for the word of God is a word of peace, Jesus himself will be our peace, and then nothing shall offend us; we shall take heed unto all our ways before God, and so walk before him, as to continue humble like David, who considered himself as a straying and lost sheep. Lord, we are by nature straying and lost sheep, seek and fetch us back from the error of our ways, and preserve us in thy pasture, in communion with thy flock, unto eternal life.

My soul had gone too far astray,
My feet too often slip;
Yet since I've not forgot thy way,
Restore thy wand'ring sheep.

APRIL VI.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. PSAL. cxxi. 1, 2, 3. cxxv. 2. cxxxii 3, 14.

THE congregation of faithful Christians upon earth is now the true Jerusalem and Zion, where alone we expect succour from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth; for he is the only protector of his church, who will not suffer our foot to slip, but will conduct us with power; we are surrounded by the hills, and armies, and fortresses of God, and God himself is round about us, as a strong

wall. He will clothe us, his priests, that is, all the faithful with righteousness and salvation. And we shall have cause to rejoice in this beautiful garment, and enjoy peace and tranquility; for God himself will dwell and rest in us, and we shall be acceptable to him in Christ, if covered with the garments of his salvation. Lord, grant that we may be clad in this robe!

Up to the hills I lift my eyes,
Th'eternal hills beyond the skies:
Thence all her help my soul derives,
There my Almighty refuge lives.

He guides our feet, he guards our way,
His morning smiles bless all the day;
He spreads the ev'ning veils, and keeps
The silent hours, while Israel sleeps.

APRIL VII.

Happy is he, that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is; which keepeth truth for ever. *Therefore*, both young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand. Psal. cxlvi. 5, 6. cxlviii. 12, 13. cxlix. 5, 6.

God fulfils all this especially under the new covenant, for Jesus our king is come according to his promise; so that God has kept his word, will eternally keep it, and fulfil all his promises; having not only created heaven and earth out of nothing, but gloriously accomplished the great work of redemption, and established his kingdom. Hence old men and children rejoice in their king and in his government. For he is so good a king, so gracious a Lord, that they praise him on their beds, and their heart and lips should overflow with the praises of his love day and night. For hereby they would be furnished with two-edged swords, to overcome all their enemies.

Long as I live I'll bless thy name,
My King, my God of love;
My work and joy shall be the same
In the bright world above.

Great is the Lord, his pow'r unknown,
And let his praise be great:
I'll sing the wonders of thy throne,
Thy works of grace repeat.
Fathers to sons shall teach thy name,
And children learn thy ways;
Ages to come thy truth proclaim,
And nations sound thy praise.

APRIL VIII.

A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord; and find the knowledge of God. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, understanding shall keep thee. PROV. i. 5, 7. ii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11.

THERE is then no other way of arriving at true wisdom, and of being kept by understanding, than to fear God, to take advice, and not to be wise in our own conceit; and when wisdom entereth our hearts, to lift up our voice, and pray that it may be increased, to look and search for it in the word of God, as miners do for gold and silver. He who doth not pray earnestly for true wisdom and knowledge, doth not yet know God, or himself, and is therefore utterly ignorant. And how can a man in any degree bring others to true knowledge and wisdom, and give them right counsel, when he himself hath not received counsel from God, and is still a fool. Lord! grant that all teachers and learners may observe this; and lead us in the right way to the true knowledge of thyself, and of Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

Behold the morning sun
Begins his glorious way;
His beams through all the nations run,
And light and life convey.

But where the gospel comes,
It spreads diviner light;
It calls dead sinners from their tombs,
And gives the blind their sight.

APRIL IX.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her. Let them not depart from thine eyes; so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid, &c. I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened, and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. PROV. iii. 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24. iv. 11, 12.

THERE is no true wisdom, happiness, security, and peace, but in the way of the wisdom from above, which is of Christ: but before we arrive at this, we must first be enabled to repent, confess our folly and sin, forsake the broad way, and come to Christ; then will all be fulfilled in us. Lord Jesus, bring us to thy communion, to thy pleasant ways of peace, that our souls may enjoy true life, that our feet may be quite secure, that we may not grow weary of our journey. May we ever persevere, without loitering or reluctance, and yet may we never be too hasty and stumble. O that at all times, particularly this night, we may have no cause to be afraid, but have strong confidence in the blessed God.

'Tis by the faith of joys to come,
We walk through deserts dark as night;
Till we arrive at heav'n, our home,
Faith is our guide, and faith our light.

Cheerful we tread the desert through,
While faith inspires a living ray,
Though lions roar and tempests blow,
And rocks and dangers fill the way.

The want of sight she well supplies,
She makes the pearly gates appear;
Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near.

So Abram by divine command,
Left his own house to walk with God;
His faith beheld the promis'd land,
And fir'd his zeal along the road.

APRIL X.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise. The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. Prov. vi. 6—11. xxi. 25. *Before he performs any good work, says Luther, death surprises him. Such are negligent preachers, magistrates, masters of families who would acquire heaven, and honours, and wealth, without labour or suffering.* The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets. Prov. xxii. 13. *Such, says Luther, are those preachers magistrates and servants, who in the performance of their duty, will not submit to any inconvenience, nor hazard.* I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well, I looked upon it, and received instruction. Prov. xxiv. 30, 31, 32.

He who doth not repent and return to God betimes, who is remiss in prayer, and inattentive to the scriptures, his heart, his house, his flock, if he be a minister, or his jurisdiction if he be a magistrate, are like the garden or vineyard, grown over with thorns and nettles. Lord!! grant that we may take this to heart, and receive instruction, lest it be also our fate.

My drowsy pow'rs, why sleep ye so?
Awake, my sluggish soul!
Nothing has half thy work to do,
Yet nothing's half so dull.
Lord, shall we lie so sluggish still,
And never act our parts?
Come, holy Dove, from th' heav'nly hill,
And set and warm our hearts.
The little ants for one poor grain,
Labour, and tug, and strive;
Yet we who have a heav'n to obtain,
How negligent we live?

APRIL XI.

Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice? counsel is mine and sound wisdom: I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates. Prov. viii. 1, 14, 15, 20, 21, 34.

We are all foolish by nature. Would we be wise, we must humbly acknowledge and forsake our foolish ways, and come to Jesus, the fountain of heavenly wisdom, hear his word and watch at his gates. He who omits this, is ignorant, though he should be a renowned doctor, statesman, or magistrate; for without this wisdom, no man can teach, govern, or enact laws, in a manner acceptable to God. But if Jesus be our wisdom, he will be our counsellor and friend, he will give understanding and strength, enrich and bless us Grant therefore, O Jesus, that we may ever watch at thy gates, attend carefully to thy word, and make no delay in obeying thy call and thy will.

Shall wisdom cry aloud,
And not her speech be heard;
The voice of God's eternal word,
Deserves it no regard?

I was his chief delight,
His everlasting Son:
Before the first of all his works
Creation was begun.

APRIL XII.

Wisdom has builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city. Whoso is simple let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled, Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. Prov. ix. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Christ says much the same in the invitation to the wedding and the great supper; Matt. xxii. and Luke xiv. He is himself this wisdom, and caused himself to be put to death for us, and hath built his house, his kingdom, and prepared every thing, and sent out his servants to invite men, and tell them all things are ready, come to the wedding. But the heavenly wisdom calls those simple and fools, whom she invites. And such are all men by nature: for is it not folly for those who are invited, to

suffer lands and oxen and wives to keep them away, to prefer temporal things to eternal, and perish for ever? Yet Christ calls the simple and fools, and even the greatest sinners, and he calleth us too by his word; therefore let us immediately, this evening, forsake all our folly, and attend to the soul in preference to the body, to things eternal rather than temporal. He will prepare a sumptuous feast for us; we shall eat of his bread, and drink of his wine, and live and be filled. Help us, O Jesus, and grant that we may hasten to thee, and truly enjoy thee.

Ho! all ye hungry starving souls,
That feed upon the wind,
And vainly strive with earthly toys
To fill an empty mind:

Eternal wisdom hath prepar'd,
A soul-reviving feast;
And bids your longing appetite
The rich provision taste.

APRIL XIII.

He that walketh uprightly (*that is, purely, simply, honestly*) walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known. The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright; but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. PROV. x. 9, 24, 28, 29, 30.

THIS whole book, indeed the whole Bible, shews the vast difference between the good and the wicked; and yet the world will not see the difference, notwithstanding the promises here delivered to the good, and the threatenings to the wicked. Lord, grant that from a principle of true faith we may become truly good, innocent, pure, and therefore safe; that we may have nothing to dread, like the wicked; who have cause to fear, lest their works should be made manifest. Let our desire be granted, that our hope may be full of joy. Grant that we may ever walk in thy way, and therein experience confidence and comfort, whilst the wicked, who depart from it, are afraid and des-

perate; and never suffer us to be removed, but enable us to stand fast for ever.

Happy the heart where graces reign,
Where love inspires the breast;
Love is the brightest of the train,
And strengthens all the rest.
'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet
In swift obedience move;
The devils know, and tremble too,
But Satan cannot love.

APRIL XIV.

Riches profit not in the day of wrath; the righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead. The wicked worketh a deceitful work; but to him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch. Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner. PROV. xi. 4, 8, 18, 24, 28, 31.

HERE again we see the difference between the good and the wicked. Though the latter be rich, yet their riches profit not in the day of wrath, nor in the calamities of war. Their distress is greater, and notwithstanding their parsimony, they are reduced to poverty, or ruined, because they vainly trusted in the uncertainty of riches; for their labour shall be in vain. But the righteous are delivered out of all trouble, and their riches are secure, being lodged in the hand of God; the more they distribute, the more they get, and flourish. And though they suffer, they have comfort in proportion: whereas the wicked often suffer more, and have no comfort. Lord, grant that we may be made partakers of all thy promises which are in Christ Jesus, yea, and Amen.

No, I shall envy them no more,
Who grow profanely great;
Though they increase their golden store,
And rise to wond'rous height.
They taste of all the joys that grow
Upon this earthly clod;
Well may they search the creatures through,
For they have ne'er a God.

APRIL XV.

He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread. He that tilleth his land, shall be satisfied with bread. He that followeth vain persons, is void of understanding. There shall no evil happen to the just; but the wicked shall be filled with mischief. There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. PROV. xii. 9, 11, 21. xiii. 7.

HE who is small and low in his own eyes, and doth not attempt great matters, but studies, to do his own business, to till his land, that is, to do that which he is commanded to do, and to which God calleth him, is certainly better than he who is moved by pride or vain curiosity to pursue things unnecessary. Solomon calls such fools. Is this prudence, that learned men should study merely for the sake of becoming great and famous, and on this account involve themselves in vain speculations and useless controversies, which do not concern them, thus neglecting their real duty, to the loss of the true sustenance of their souls? But it is necessary in our wordly matters, that every man should attend to his own business, and not attempt various undertakings at once, with a view to great wealth; for according to an old German proverb, "fourteen trades, fifteen misfortunes." And thus a man may seem to make himself rich, and yet have nothing; for it is not great affluence only which makes a man rich, but rather the happy disposition of being contented with a little.

Deny thyself, and take thy cross,
Is the Redeemer's great command!
Nature must count her gold but dross,
If she would gain this heav'nly land.

The fearful soul, that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteem'd almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure

Lord, let not all my hopes be vain,
Create my heart entirely new;
Which hypocrites could ne'er attain,
Which false apostates never knew.

APRIL XVI.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not; but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. Fools make a mock at sin. There is a way, which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but the fool rageth and is confident. PROV. xiii. 20. xiv. 6, 9, 12, 16.

A WISE man is humble, afraid of his own heart, and has recourse to prayer for success; but he who relies on his own heart, his understanding, or learning, is a fool. He is proud, presumptuous, insolent, and runs headlong into ruin; though such a man's ways seem right unto him, yet the end thereof are the ways of death. He is a companion of fools, for persons of similar dispositions easily agree together, and so he becomes more and more foolish and presumptuous. And though he should seek wisdom, he will not find it; for dissolute men, says Luther, seek wisdom, but not in earnest; they seek it for their own purpose, pride and vanity; therefore they never obtain it; they laugh at those who make Jesus their wisdom. Lord, grant that we may earnestly seek true wisdom and knowledge, and associate with the wise and the good, not with scorners; that we may increase in wisdom, and shun all evil.

Preserve me, Lord, in time of need,
For succour to thy throne I flee;
But have no merits there to plead,
My goodness cannot reach to thee.

APRIL XVII.

In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death. PROV. xiv. 26, 27, 32.

WHAT a superiority do the righteous enjoy over the wicked! They have at all times, and in all calamities, a sure refuge, a strong asylum, to which they fly, and in

which their children also shall be sheltered. There was a person, who received great comfort from these words, in the late troubles:—What more can we desire, than temporal and spiritual refuge for ourselves and children? The fear of the Lord shall be also in us a spring of life; for we adhere to Jesus, the true fountain of life, and who is himself our life. The fear of the Lord secures us against sin, which is a fatal snare of death. If the wicked be driven away in his wickedness, we have nothing to fear in the dark valley of death, and may be cheerful even in our expiring moments. O glorious promise! Lord, give us faith, and fulfil all these promises towards us and our children, and grant us particularly comfort in the hour of death.

Ye sons of pride, that hate the just,
And trample on the poor;
When death has brough you down to dust,
Your pomp shall rise no more.

God will my naked soul receive,
When sep'rate from the flesh;
And break the prison of the grave,
To raise my bones afresh.

The last great day shall change the scene;
When will that hour appear?
When shall the just revive, and reign
O'er all who scorn'd them here?

APRIL XVIII.

Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure, and trouble therewith. The Lord will destroy the house of the proud. He that is greedy of gain, troubleth his own house; he that hateth gifts shall live. The Lord is far from the wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility. Prov. xv. 16, 25, 27, 29, 33.

It is certainly greater gain and wealth, to fear the Lord, to trust in him, and be content with a small substance, than to possess great riches, without the fear of God, without faith, without a contented heart, and so to have much disquiet. And indeed large possessions are often only a trouble to the mind. The house of him who

hath no fear of God, and is proud, is still exposed to destruction: for God resisteth the proud; or if he be covetous, he destroyeth his house himself, as many proud and mercenary men have experienced in the late calamities of war. But they who hate gifts, especially persons who sit in judgment, they shall live, the Lord will be their refuge even in calamities. The Lord is still far from the wicked, but he is nigh to the righteous with his grace and help, and heareth their prayer; for he is nigh to all that call upon him. O Lord, give us thy true fear, preserve us from pride and covetousness, and lead us to everlasting honour!

The saints to sore distress are brought.
And wait and long complain;
Their cries shall not be still forgot,
Nor shall their hopes be vain.

APRIL XIX.

The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. PROV. xvi. 1, 2, 3, 7.

MEN form many schemes and designs, of saying and doing this or that, but the success of all our undertakings proceeds from the Lord. No man should project any thing without God, nor rely upon the goodness of his intention, but confess, that, if left to himself, he can only err. He should be diffident of his opinion, and not imagine, that his way is always pure and right; and then the Lord himself will establish his heart in all his ways. He must daily commit all his affairs unto the Lord, and intreat his guidance in every circumstance of life. Then his projects and designs will succeed, for the counsel of the Lord standeth fast. Every thing that he intends and undertakes, under the direction of God, will succeed; other men will see and admire it, and even his enemies will be at peace with him.

The Lord is just and kind,
The meek shall learn his ways;
And every humble sinner find
The methods of his grace.

O who can ever find
The errors of his ways;
Yet with a bold presumptuous mind
I would not dare transgress.

I hear thy word with love,
And I would fain obey;
Send thy good Spirit from above,
To guide me, lest I stray.

APRIL XX.

Every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord; though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. Pride goeth before destruction; and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. PROV. xvi. 5, 18, 19, 32.

How horrible should a proud man appear in his own eyes, since he is an abomination to the Lord, who will resist and scatter the proud; however they may hang together, or however strong their party may be, their punishment and fall will certainly take place. However great, or powerful, or learned, a man may be, if he grows proud, his acquirements will be vain. It is therefore doubtless better to be of a lowly mind, to be humble with the afflicted, to espouse the cause of the poor and miserable, than to divide the spoil with the proud, and make large conquests, though it were of whole cities and countries; for he is better and greater in the sight of God, who is master of his own mind, patient, and superior to his own will and pride; the Lord is gracious to him. Grant us, O Lord, true patience and humility of heart, that we may ever be preserved from falling!

I'll sing thy truth and mercy, Lord,
I'll sing the wonders of thy word;
Not all thy works and names below,
So much thy pow'r and glory show.

Amidst a thousand snares I stand,
Upheld and guarded by thy hand;
Thy words my fainting soul revive,
And keep my dying faith alive.

The God of heav'n maintains his state
Frowns on the proud, and scorns the great;
But from his throne descends to see
The sons of humble poverty.

APRIL XXI.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. It is an honour for a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling. PROV. xviii. 10, 17. xix. 11. xx. 3.

FAITH, the word of God, patience, and prayer, are the best armour, and will keep us in a strong tower; for by faith we continue in the name of the Lord, which is to us a strong tower, and will shelter us in every distress. By the word of God, which is sure, we are, through fervent prayer, secure in our path may face all mankind, and be read to answer every man. If we can pass over offences, and patience arms us with the mind of Christ, then we shall be ever victorious; for the Lord himself will fight for us. It is no disgrace thus patiently to pass over an offence, but an honour and real prudence; consequently the impatient, who are always litigating and quarrelling, are fools, for they give uneasiness to other men, as well as themselves. Some men live in contention, as if it were their element, and can neither speak nor write, without using bitter and opprobri ous language.

When overwhelm'd with grief,
My heart within me dies;
Helpless, and far from all relief,
To heav'n I lift mine eyes.

Within thy presence, Lord,
For ever I'll abide;
Thou art the tow'r of my defence,
The refuge where I hide.

O lead me to the rock
That's high above my head,
And make the covert of thy wings,
My shelter and my shade.

Thou givest me the lot
Of those that fear thy name;
If endless life be their reward,
I shall possess the same.

APRIL XXII.

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts. *(Whatever is done by God's command, says Luther, we are sure is right. Without God's word every things is mere imagination, conjecture, and uncertainty.)* A wicked man (*who follows not the word of God, but his own conceit*) hardeneth his face; *but* there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord. The horse is prepared against the day of battle; but safety is of the Lord. PROV. xxi. 2, 29, 30, 31.

HE who acts without the command of God, and following his own humour, runs on headlong, to overcome a difficulty; whether he bends or breaks it, precipitates and destroys himself, be he ever so great, powerful, rich, and wise; for there is no wisdom, nor understanding, &c. against the Lord. We should all observe this, that we may humble ourselves, and do every thing by the command of God alone. Armies especially should be taught, that however well the men may be equipped and disciplined, yet blessing and victory cometh of the Lord; else the most formidable power and the wisest counsel may do more hurt than good. But as spiritual and temporal victories come from the Lord, we must make him our friend, and not fight against him with our sins; when victory is obtained, we must ascribe it to him, else he will suffer us to be subdued.

God is a spirit just and wise,
He sees our inmost mind;
In vain to heav'n we raise our cries,
And leave our hearts behind.

Great God, should thy severer eye,
And thine impartial hand,
Mark and revenge iniquity,
No mortal flesh could stand.

Nothing but truth before his throne
With honour can appear;
The painted hypocrites are known
Thro' the disguise they wear.

APRIL XXIII.

A prudent man forseeth the evil, *(the judgments of God)* and hideth himself *(in a sure refuge;)* but the simple *)the unconverted)* pass on *(securely, without the fear of God or prayer)* and are punished, By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life. Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long; for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off. PROV. xxii. 3, 4. xxiii. 17, 18.

WHOEVER duly considers the present evil, the judgments of God, and desires to hide himself, must first turn to the Lord from all his sins, and no longer follow other sinners, but fly penitently to the name of Jesus, that strong tower, walk daily in the fear of God, suffer, endure, and be patient. From this he will dersive no harm or disgrace; on the contrary, it shall be riches and honour and life to him, and his expectation shall turn to joy; whereas the impatient, who will not endure any thing, plunge themselves into calamities and distress. Lord, keep our hearts continually in thy fear, grant us patience, and preserve us from all evil.

Let Sion in her king rejoice,
Tho' tyrants rage, and kindoms rise;
He utters his Almighty voice,
The nations melt, the tumult dies.

Be still, and learn that I am God,
I'll be exalted o'er the lands;
I will be known and fear'd abroad:
But still my throne in Sion stands.

The Lord of old for Jacob fought,
And Jacob's God is still our aid;
Behold the works his hand has wrought,
The desolations he has made.

O Lord of hosts, Almighty king,
While we so near thy presence dwell!
Our faith shall sit secure, and sing
Defiance to the gates of hell.

APRIL XXIV.

So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul; when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. Say not, I will do so to him, as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work. He that hath no rule over his own spirit (*but is impatient, and returns evil for evil*); is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. PROV. xxiv. 14, 23, 29. xxv. 28.

THE son of Sirach also says, buy wisdom without money. But very few learn or buy this wisdom for the soul, which they may have gratis. Men had rather buy wisdom for money, but this is not spiritual wisdom, which carries the soul through distress and death; it is merely wisdom to make a figure with. Wisdom for the soul requires humble disciples; therefore so few admire it. Whoever would learn and buy it, must, with the son of Sirach, first lift up his hands, confess his folly, and bend to her yoke. If he who arrives at this wisdom be a judge or magistrate, he will not have repect to persons in judgment, nor return evil for evil. For, as we read, ch. xiii. 16. a fool's wrath is presently known; it breaks out without discretion, and he becomes as a city without walls. Lord, grant unto our souls the true wisdom, which will avail us even in death.

Thus saith the wisdom of the Lord,
Bless'd is the man who hears my word;
Keeps daily watch before my gates,
And at my feet for mercy waits.

APRIL XXV.

Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him. Whoso diggeth a pit, shall fall therein. He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife. A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. (*He saith of himself*) Surely I am more brutish then any man, and have not the understanding of a man. PROV. xxvi. 12, 27. xxviii. 25. xxix. 23. xxx. 2.

HE that is wise in his own conceit, is proud, insolent and contentious; he scorns and despises other men, and

diggeth pits for them, but falls into them himself, his own pride will plunge him therein. There is certainly more hope of a fool than of such a conceited, proud, and contentious man. A man of true wisdom is humble; he doth not esteem himself wise, but will confess before God, "I am, without Christ, the most foolish of all men." Hence, Luther says, "Wise men acknowledge that their wisdom is nothing. Fools know every thing, and cannot err;" therefore they presume to be proud, and pretend to great things, censure every thing, and thus manifest their folly. Whereas the humble apply for direction to God, and make Jesus, as revealed in the Scripture, their only wisdom.

Bury'd in shadows of the night,
We lie till Christ restores the light,
Wisdom descends to heal the blind,
And chase the darkness of the mind.

Our very frame is mix'd with sin,
His Spirit makes our nature clean;
Such virtues from his sufferings flow,
At once to cleanse and pardon too.

Our guilty souls are drown'd in tears,
Till his atoning blood appears;
Then we awake from deep distress,
And sing, the Lord our righteousness.

Jesus beholds where Satan reigns,
Binding his slaves in heavy chains;
He sets the pris'ners free, and breaks
The iron bondage from our necks.

APRIL XXVI.

He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. To have respect of persons is not good; for, for a piece of bread that man will transgress. He that hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not, that poverty shall come upon him. He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse. PROV. xxviii. 8, 21, 22, 27.

THE covetous and unjust man heaps up much substance, and knoweth not who will have it, for it often falls into the hands of strangers, and the poor. He hasteth to be rich, but to his destruction and ruin; for how many

misfortunes have rich men experienced in a time of war! Ill-gotten goods do not prosper, and reach not to the third heir; daily experience confirms the truth of this. How unjustly acquired and dangerous is that property, when judges themselves have respect of persons, take bribes, pervert justice, and commit iniquity for a piece of bread. He who gives nothing to the poor, is also unjust, though he should take nothing unjustly away. Such an one shall have many a curse; he is unmerciful and shall be judged unmercifully. But he that giveth unto the poor shall not lack. The alms he hath given, in faith and love, become a loan in the hand of God, for which he shall receive abundant interest, He is God's sower; and God will give bread to his sower, and will not suffer him to want.

Thrice happy man, who fears the Lord,
Loves his commands, and trusts his word;
Honour and peace his days attend,
And blessings to his seed descend.

When times grow dark, and tidings spread
That fill his neighbours round with dread,
His heart is arm'd against the fear,
For God, with all his pow'r, is there.

Compassion dwells upon his mind,
To works of mercy still inclin'd:
He lends the poor some present aid,
Or gives them not to be repaid:

His soul, well fix'd upon the Lord,
Draws heav'nly courage from his word,
Amidst the darkness light shall rise
To chear his heart and bless his eyes.

APRIL XXVII.

For the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged. PROV. xxviii. 2. *The son of Sirach says.* ECCL. x. 8. Because of unrighteous dealings; injuries and riches gotten by deceit, the kingdom is translated from one people to another.

THE sins of princes and subjects produce great wars, revolutions, and changes; for after tyranny, injustice, and

avarice, or perhaps abominable profusion, have had a long reign, and oppressed a country and its inhabitants, God will interpose, and sometimes deprive a prince of his dominions; for he alone presides over the kindoms of men, and gives them to whomsoever he will. Subjects should likewise remember their sins, when such changes and calamities of war befal them; every one should consider himself as having contributed fuel to the fire; and though he should not feel so much distress as others, let him not be secure; he knoweth not what may soon befal him. Sin is the ruin of a people, and brings on temporal and eternal suffering: therefore every man should turn from all his sins, that he may escape the judgments of God. Lord, grant that the evils we now suffer may lead us truly to repent, and let not any of the changes we undergo proceed in thy wrath, but tend to glorify thy name and propagate thy kingdom.

Where shall the man be found,
Who fears t' offend his God?
Who loves the gospel's joyful sound,
And trembles at the rod?

The Lord shall make him know
The secrets of his heart,
The wonders of his cov'nant show
And all his truth impart.

The dealing of his hand
Are truth and mercy still;
With such as to his cov'nant stand
And love to do his will.

APRIL XXVIII.

He that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely, *(that is, applieth the word of God to his instruction, and trusteth in that alone,)* he shall be delivered. *For*, Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. PROV. xxviii. 25, 26. xxx. 5.

HYPOCRITES and blind Pharisees imagine, that their heart is good, simple, and upright; yet nothing is more deceitful than our heart; he therefore who trusteth in it is a fool, for he trusteth in the greatest deceiver and seducer, and

cheats himself out of his salvation, by suffering himself to be prevented from genuine repentance. He who desires truly to repent, must acknowledge with sorrow not only his gross sins, but his evil heart, his inward corruption; and must call upon God to forgive him his secret sins, and wholly to change his heart. In doing this, he must adhere to the gracious word of God, and under its direction trust in none but God and Christ; so shall the word of God be to him a shield against all his enemies. Lord, grant that we may never put our trust in our own heart, but that we may humbly confess its corruption, and through the power of thy grace be delivered therefrom.

Happy the man, to whom his God
No more imputes his sin;
But wash'd in the Redeemer's blood,
Hath made his garments clean.

While I my inward guilt supprest
No quiet cold I find;
Thy wrath lay burning in my breast,
And rack'd my tortur'd mind.

APRIL XXIX.

He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes. The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. There is a sore evil, which I have seen under the sun namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt Eccles. v. 10, 11, 12, 13.

The covetous man has never enough; the more he has and gets, the more he desires to get. What benefit does he derive from his riches? He eats and drinks; so does the poor man, who perhaps relishes his plain fare better than the rich man doth his costly table. The one can sleep soundly amidst his poverty and labour; the other often loses his rest by being too full, and thus his riches are a plague even to his body; this is a sore evil. The damage to his soul is much greater. Such covetous men, who desire to be rich, have the root of all evil in them, and are insnared and sunk in perdition, by their own appe-

tites, which are the strongest incentives to evil, and can only be restrained by a true conversion. Lord, preserve us from every snare, and grant us to be happy in thee and contented.

My God, my portion, and my love,
My everlasting all,
I've none but thee in heav'n above,
Or on this earthly ball.

In vain the bright, the burning sun,
Scatters his feeble light;
'Tis thy sweet beams create my noon,
If thou withdraw 'tis night.

How vain a toy is glittering wealth,
If once compar'd to thee;
Or what's my safety or my health,
Or all my friends to me?

APRIL XXX.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men: and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. I said of laughter, it is mad: and of mirth, what doth it? ECCLES. vii. 2, 3, 4. ii. 2.

How careless and impenitent are men, in chusing to go to the house of mirth and rioting, as the vulgar particularly do on the Lord's Day, which is an aggravation of the sin. Persons of distinction have at certain seasons their daily assemblies, balls, or sports. At such times their whole heart is in the house of joy. But the Scripture here calls them fools; for none of them remembers his end, his death, from which we are never secure at any hour; many have died suddenly at the gaming table and in the ball room. Now whoever dies thus careless and impenitent, dies unhappily. Is not this folly? Would it not be better and wiser, instead of this mad joy, to mourn religiously for our sins? for godly sorrow belongs to true repentance, and amends the heart. Without such godly sorrow we remain impenitent, and have no true comfort in life or death; for none but they that

mourn in Sion, and lament their sins, shall be comforted. Oh, that we might this evening feel a godly sorrow for our sins, and repent.

Lo the young tribes of Adam rise,
And thro' all nature rove,
Fulfil the wishes of their eyes,
And taste the joys they love!

The Judge prepares his throne on high,
The frighted earth and seas
Avoid the fury of his eye,
And flee before his face.

They give a loose to wild drsires;—
But let the sinners know,
The strict account that God requires,
Of all the works they do.

How shall I bear that dreadful day,
And stand the fiery test;
I give all mortal joys away,
To be for ever blest.

MAY I.

Better is the end of a thing *(of a good thing)*, than the beginning thereof (*Luther. All is well that ends well. The beginning is easy)*; and the patient in spirit, than the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Eccl. vii. 8, 9. ix. 10.

We are required to be in haste, not to do evil, nor to be angry, but in every good, in hearing and doing good, and we are to do every thing with our might, that is, speedily, actively, cheerfully, earnestly, and with pleasure. As St. Paul says, we are not to be weary in well-doing. Above all things, the work of conversion should be begun with life and spirit, in the days of our youth, whilst God calls and excites us to hasten, and not to delay in consulting with flesh and blood; then we may soon accomplish our point: for great advantage is gained by decided resolution. But we must not only begin with this life and activity; we must persevere in it unto the end. The end crowns the work. Lord grant us grace to turn to thee this very evening, whilst we have thy call,

or should we have already accepted it, may we still more entirely surrender ourselves to thee, and so do the work with all our might, and persevere in it unto the end. For it is good to begin, it is better to continue, but it is best of all to finish.

Come, sound his praise abroad,
And hymns of glory sing;
Jehovah is the sovereign God,
The universal King.

To-day attend his voice,
Nor dare provoke his rod!
Come, like the people of his choice,
And own your gracious God.

MAY II.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundredth times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that fear God. But it shall not be well with the wicked. There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. Eccl. viii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

God doth not immediately punish the sinner, but is long-suffering, and waits for repentance, to which his long-suffering should lead men. On this account men often grow more secure and hardened in sin. They imagine, because God's sentence is not executed speedily, that he will be like unto them, lightly regard their sins, and not punish them at all. And they are rendered still more secure, when they observe, that the righteous often suffer, and the wicked prosper, as if they were good, and had done the works of the righteous. But God doth this, in order to improve the piety of the righteous, by chastisements, and to draw the wicked to himself by the engaging motive of benefits. If they are not moved to repentance by this, their punishment hereafter will be the heavier. But it shall be well with the righteous at last, both in this world and the next. Lord, grant that we may not stumble at thy judgments, and enable us to wait patiently for the end.

When man grows bold in sin,
My heart within me cries,
He hath no faith of God within,
Nor fear before his eyes.
But there's a dreadful God,
Tho' men renounce his fear;
His justice hid behind the cloud,
Shall one great day appear.
How excellent his love,
Whence all our safety springs;
O never let my soul remove
From underneath his wings.

MAY III.

This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me; there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: now there was found in it a poor wise men, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless, the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. Wisdom is better that weapons of war. When he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool. Eccl. ix. 13, 14, 15, 16, 18. x. 3.

How many a poor, but wise and righteous man may at this time have delivered a city by his prayers, though the world despises him. Many even ridicule prayer itself, and though the scorner be indeed a fool, he calls every one, especially him who prayeth, a fool, and tells him with a sneer, that he is fit for nothing else. Were we perfectly qualified for this, we should be very accomplished indeed. The great day will shew, who have been fool in this world.

Are sinners now so senseless grown,
That they the saints devour?
And never worship at thy throne,
Nor fear thine awful power?
Dost thou not dwell among the just
And yet our foes deride?
That we should make thy name our trust,
Great God, confound their pride.
Great God, appear to their surprize,
Reveal thy dreadful name;
Let them no more thy wrath despise,
Nor turn our hope to shame.

MAY IV.

Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning; *that is, when they are intent only upon eating and drinking, and luxury.* Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Eccl. x. 16, 17. xi. 9.

Young persons love to have their liberty, take their pleasure, and do only what they please; and they see examples of this in their betters, who eat and drink only for their pleasure, and do nothing in season, but turn night into day, and live in all kinds of vanity and luxury, especially in carnival times, and at particular festivals. But all ranks ought to remember the judgments of God; for God will bring into judgment the sins of youth as well as those of aged and eminent persons; for he is the judge of all. Some of his judgments take place in this world, when great men study only the gratification of their sensual appetites, eating, drinking, and wanton joy, thereby occasioning the people to sin: therefore it is written, "Wo to thee, O land!" O that princes and subjects would humbly and seriously reflect on the cause of the present judgments!

Almighty God, turn off their eyes
From these alluring vanities;
And let the thunder of thy word,
Awake their souls to fear the Lord.

MAY V.

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. Sol. Song, ii. 4, 5. iv. 16. v. 1.

In communion with Jesus, both the head and the heart are warmed. The soul obtains meat and drink, and that not sparingly, but bountifully. Her bridegroom intro-

duces her to his banqueting-house, refreshes and comforts her abundantly, that is, fills and strengthens her, so as to render her fruitful and fit for every good work; thus he invites the souls of men, saying, "Eat, my beloved, and drink, O friends. We should therefore not be backward, but remember that it is our duty to apply Jesus, his grace, and his righteousness to ourselves, that we may be filled, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. By this means we invite Jesus into our garden, to taste his excellent fruits, that is, to accept graciously the fruits which we have brought forth through him, and to bless them. And then Jesus will come and refresh us farther, and he will sup with us, and we with him. Lord Jesus, grant us life and full comfort with thee, that we may bring forth fruit abundantly.

Behold the rose of Sharon here,
The lily which the vallies bear;
Behold the tree of life, that gives
Refreshing fruit, and healing leaves.

Kindly he brought me to the place
Where stands the banquet of his grace,
He saw me faint, and o'er my head
The banner of his love he spread.

MAY VI.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchants? Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? Sol. Song. iii. 6. iv. 4. vi. 10.

The first words shew, how acceptable the church of Christ, and every member thereof, is to her Saviour and bridegroom, that her prayer is a sweet smelling savour, which ascends like incense to him in Heaven. No enemy can damp the fragrant incense of her entreaties; they are, according to chap. ii. 14. "a sweet voice." This should excite us all to sincere and persevering prayer, and be a comfort to us against all our ene-

mies ; for our prayers and sighs, supported by the word of God, are swords, and shields, and armour of strength, and we may rest secure, as in a strong tower. We shall even become terrible to our enemies, particularly to the formidable enemies of our souls, to whom we shall appear as an army of mighty men, And those mighty warriors, the holy angels, shall guard us powerfully with their swords, day and night. Lord, grant that our prayer may come up to thee, as a fragrant incense and a sweet ordour, and be accepted as an evening sacrifice, that we being protected with thy shield against all our enemies, may become terrible to them.

When strangers stand, and hear me tell
What beauties in my Saviour dwell,
Where he is gone they fain would know,
That they may seek and love him too.

He has engrossed my warmest love,
No earthly charms my soul can move :
I have a mansion in his heart,
Nor death nor hell shall make us part.

O may my spirit daily rise
On wings of faith above the skies,
Till death shall make my last remove,
To dwell for ever with my love.

MAY VII.

Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee. Sol. Song, iv. 1, 7. and vi. 4.

Here the bridegroom addresses his whole church, and every true member thereof, as his bride, repeatedly calling her fair, very fair, and without spot, for he hath cleansed her from all sin with his blood, and clothed her with the fair ornament of his righteousness. Hence he saith to his disciples ; " Ye are clean. He that is washed is clean every whit." Every faithful soul should consider this, and believe what the bridegroom so frequently repeats ; for he knows how difficult it is for a sinner to believe. We should trust more to his word than to our own feelings, and be assured, that his father and he

delight in the soul that is fair and without spot through the atonement of Jesus. The ornament with which we are decked is his; he covers all our sins with it, so that he will behold nothing sinful in us, but be pleased with the lovely ornament of his blood and his righteousness. This is great comfort in time of distress or death; but it is a comfort, which belongs only to the penitent, to those who have forgotten their father's house, and renounced their own righteousness, and earthly mind. Lord Jesus, divest us of our own righteousness, and of the defiled garment of the flesh, and grant that we may be found by thee fair and beautiful, that thou mayest delight in us, and we may receive comfort from thy favour in the hour of death.

Kind is the speech of Christ our Lord.
Affection sounds in ev'ry word:
Lo, thou art fair, my love, he cries,
Not the young doves have sweeter eyes.

Thou art all fair, my bride, to me,
I will behold no spot in thee;
What mighty wonders love performs
And puts a comeliness on worms!

Not dens of prey nor flow'ry plains,
Nor earthly joys, nor earthly pains,
Shall hold my feet, or force my stay,
When Christ commands my soul away.

MAY VIII.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? Set me as a seal upon thine heart, and as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. Sol. Song, viii. 5. 6, 7.

The true church of Christ, and every faithful soul, leaneth upon her friend in the wilderness of this world, relies wholly upon him, and upon nothing else. She desires his name to be impressed as a seal upon her heart, that he may seal, and guard, and inclose her, that she may

be, according to chap. iv. 12, "a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed," so that nothing may hurt her. She prays in particular for a right sense of his love, that it may be strong in her, that death may not separate her from it, that it may be such a vehement and internal flame, as no waters of affliction can quench. Such is the love of Christ towards us. Lord Jesus, grant that we may earnestly long for thy love, and pray for it day and night; and not cease till thou hast kindled this flame of the Lord within us. May we be duly sensible of thy love, and love thee in return: may we be sealed by it in our hearts, inclosed and guarded, that no enemy, not even death, may separate us from thine affection and compasionate regard.

Who is this fair one in distress,
That travels from the wilderness?
And press'd with sorrow and with sins,
On her beloved Lord she leans.

This is the spouse of Christ our God,
Bought with the treasures of his blood;
And her request and her complaint,
Is but the voice of every saint.

O let my name engraven stand,
Both on thy heart and on thy hand,
Seal me upon thine arm, and wear
That pledge of love for ever there

MAY IX.

Why should ye be stricken any more: ye will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; &c. Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire, &c. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? &c. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Come now, and let us reason together. ISAIAH i. 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18.

How many countries, cities and villages are become desolate! And what is the cause? Sin and hypocrisy. Men bring their offerings, celebrate their feasts, frequent

the church and the Lord's supper, perform external acts of worship, and yet neither change their heart, nor amend their conduct, but revolt more and more. If we wish for better times, let us reform our hearts, and pray that we may be enabled to cleanse them thoroughly, and put away the evil of our doings, even over growing and predominant sin; then will the Lord graciously reason with us, and forgive our sins: though they be as scarlet, make them as white as snow; and deliver us from the distresses of war, sickness, poverty, and other plagues. So that repentance, true repentance of the heart, is necessary; without this no outward appearance, nor any thing else will avail us.

The Lord the judge his churches warns,
Let hypocrites attend and fear;
Who place their hopes in rites and forms,
But make not faith or love their care.

To heav'n they lift their hands unclean.
Defil'd with lust, defil'd with blood;
By night they practise every sin,
By day their mouths draw near to God.

MAY X.

It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, &c. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is pround, &c. Isa. ii. 2, 3, 11, 12. See chap. iii. 16, 21. Moreover the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, &c.

The above glorious promise is already fulfiled, but will be more fully accomplished in the latter days. Before the completion of it, great spiritual and temporal judgments will take place, as we already experience. Pride and haughtiness will prevail among the learned and unlearned, like the description here given of the proud Israelites and their haughty wives, But when the day of

God's judgment shall fully come, the lofty looks will be humbled, and the haughty daughters stript of their pomp. How many proud women have experienced this in the late war! On that day shall the Lord at last be known, and alone exalted, for the glory will be given to him, instead of ascribing it, as men now do, wholly to themselves, and seeking their own glory.

Let Babel fear when Sion prays,
Babel prepare for long distress;
When Sion's God himself arrays
In terror, and in righteousness.

With dreadful glory God fulfils
What his afflicted saints request;
And with Almighty wrath reveals
His love, to give his churches rest.

Then shall the flocking nations run
To Sion's hill, and own their Lord:
The rising and the setting sun
Shall see the Saviour's name ador'd.

MAY XI.

Wo unto them, that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine inflame them. And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, &c. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, &c. Isa. v. 11, 12, 14. see ver. 20, 21, 23.

The same is the case at present. Men are intent only upon sensual pleasures and gain: and secure amidst the distresses of war, they drink, and play, and dance, and regard not the work of the Lord, this is, his judgments. They enjoy themselves, till the enemy or some other distress is at hand. The moment the danger is over, they return to their sins, and particularly profaning the Lord's day. The vulgar think it impossible to live without merriment and dancing, and the masters of the houses they frequent, think it the duty of their calling to get all they can. But it is a sinful gain, and attended with a curse. God here pronounces a woe upon them, and also

upon those who think themselves wise, and pervert judgment for a reward. The Israelites were carried away captive; what will become of us, if we do not amend ourselves? Hell hath opened her mouth wide. Magistrates should be reminded by these judgments to stop such wanton courses, since even heathens have done it.

Let the unthinking many say,
Who will bestow some earthly good?
But, Lord, thy light and love we pray,
Our souls desire this heavenly food.

Then shall my cheerful pow'rs rejoice,
At grace and favours so divine;
Nor will I change my happy choice,
For all their corn and all their wine.

MAY XII.

And one *(a seraph)* cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Isa. vi. 8.

Here the Seraphim confess and praise the holy Trinity. We should do the same, but with a heart possessed by an holy and awful reverence, since even the seraphim cover their faces and feet before the holiness of God. If God be thus holy, we should likewise be holy, as he saith himself, 1 Pet. i. 16; but most men instead of applying themselves to holiness, make a mock at it. Yet no man shall see God without it; for how can we approach the holy God in heaven with an unholy heart? Would we be holy, we must first turn from every thing sinful and unholy, and seek justification in the blood of the Lamb. If God be the Jehovah Zebaoth, the Lord of hosts, then all the hosts of men should praise him, and ascribe the victory only to him. If all the ends of the earth are filled with his glory, let our hearts also glorify him. But vain glory is now every where predominant; thousands are sacrificed to it, ruined in body and soul, whilst men assume to themselves the aid they receive from God, and rob him of the honour. Preserve us, O my God, from such sacrilege.

Glory to God the Father's name,
Who, from our sinful race,
Chose out his favorites to proclaim
The honours of his grace.
Glory to God the Spirit give,
From whose Almighty pow'r;
Our souls their heavenly birth deriv'd,
And blese the happy hour.
Glory to God the Son be paid,
Who dwelt in humble clay;
And, to redeem us from the dead,
Gave his own life away.

MAY XIII.

For all this anger is not turned a way, but his hand is streatched out still. For the people turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts. For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed. Isa. ix. 12, 13, 16. See Jer. ii. 30. In vain have I smitten your children, they receive no correction. *On the contrary we read of the Eggptians*, Isa. xix. 22. And the Lord shall smite Egypt, he shall smite and heal it, and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.

The wrath of God still continues to punish and afflict men; they do not turn from their sins to him that smiteth them, and truly repent; God therefore smiteth them because they desire to be freed merely from scourges and plagues, not from sin. Some teachers partake in this guilt, by not pointing out to men the cause of all distress, and shewing them, that God seeks their repentance and conversion by means of war, famine, sickness, and other calamities. Did men take warning by these afflictions and troubles, repent and turn unto the Lord, like the Egyptians, to the disgrace of the Israelites, God would soon be intreated of them, heal, help, and deliver them from their distress.

O God, to whom revenge belongs,
Proclaim thy wrath aloud;
Let sovereign power redress our wrongs,
Let justce smite the proud.
But God will ne'er cast off his saints,
Nor his own promise break;
He pardons his inheritance
For their Redeemer's sake.

MAY XIV.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Isa. xi. 1, 2, 9.

Grant, O my Saviour, that I may be engrafted upon thee, as the genuine green branch, or the tree of life, and may draw strength and nourishment from thee, in order to bring forth fruit. For us, even for me also hast thou received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Grant, that the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord may rest upon me; let my heart, and all the world be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; for thou hast promised this both in the above passage and in Habback. iii. 14. These my promises I plead, fully assured that thou wilt fulfil them.

Hosanna to the royal Son
Of David's ancient line!
His nature's two, his person one,
Mysterious and divine.

Blest he that comes to wretched men
With peaceful news from Heav'n!
Hosanna's in the highest strain
To Christ the Lord be given!

The root of David here we find,
And offspring is the same;
Eternity and time are join'd
In our Immanuel's name.

Let mortals ne'er refuse to take
Th' Hosanna on their tongues;
Lest rocks and stones should rise and break
Their silence into songs.

MAY XV.

O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold,

God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, &c. With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things; this known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitants of Zion; for great is the holy one of Israel in the midst of thee. Isa. xii. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.

The whole spiritual Zion, and every penitent soul should repeat the same words in faith, sing praises to their Saviour, and not always complain, much less despair; for the Lord hath turned away his anger also from us, and is comforting us. He is our Saviour, our help, our deliverer and strength; so that we may be secure, and have nothing to fear. With him we cannot perish for want, but shall draw water with joy out of him, the well of salvation; out of his fullness we shall receive grace for grace, and experience that the Holy One of Israel is great, and intimately known unto us. Yes, my Saviour, manifest thyself to us, as thou dost to thine own people, so gloriously, that we may draw water with joy out of the well of salvation, and know thee to be our Saviour, and our strength, that with thee we may be safe and void of fear, sing praises to thee, and receive comfort even to the hour of death.

Dearest of all the names above,
My Jesus and my God,
Who can resist thy heav'nly love,
Or trifle with thy blood?

'Tis by the merits of thy death
The Father smiles again:
'Tis by thy interceding breath
The Spirit dwells with men.

MAY XVI.

In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the faces of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Isa. xxv. 6, 7, 8, 9.

This glorious promise, already fulfilled in part, will be completely fulfilled, especially in the last times. The counsels of our God (v. 1.) "of old are faithfulness and truth;" that is, he hath always fulfilled all his promises, as the faithful and true God. He will treat us in like manner, make unto us a feast of fat things, and feed our souls abundantly, insomuch that we shall not be ashamed to eat and to drink. He will also swallow up death in our case; we may wait for him with confidence, and be assured that he will help us. Lord, strengthen our faith, that we may eat and drink of thy feast of fat things, be glad and rejoice; so that in the day of trial, having waited for thee, we may experience thine aid in life and death, and have strong confidence in him who rose from the dead, and swallowed up death in victory.

Come let us lift our voices high,
High as our joys arise;
And join the songs above the sky,
Where pleasure never dies.

MAY XVII.

With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them. Isa. xxvi. 9, 10, 12, 16.

Here we learn the difference between the children of God and the children of this world. The former desire none but their Saviour day and night, and trust that he will ordain a place for them, and succour them in both body and soul. When they have done any thing right, they attribute it to him only, give the glory to him, and say, Lord thou hast done this, thou hast given unto us; we have nothing of our own but sin. But the children of this world seek and desire to get rid of trouble, crying anxiously in their distress; yet they care not for Christ, nor for deliverance from sin.

Hence the favour shewn to them, neither moves them to learn righteousness, nor reforms them; they do evil whether in prosperity or adversity, for they see not the glory of the Lord, how holy a God he is, and how his name is glorified by his judgments and deliverances; being quite blind, and not awakened to repentance, either by the mercies, or the judgments of God.

Now, I, with all my cares
Will lean upon the Lord;
I'll cast my burdens on his arm,
And rest upon his word.

My thoughts address his throne,
When morning brings the light;
I seek his blessing every noon,
And pay my vows at night.

His arms shall well sustain
The children of his love:
The ground on which their safety stands
No earthly power can move.

MAY XVIII.

We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement: when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Isa. xxviii. 15. xxix. 15.

Thus at the present time men live securely, as if they had made a covenant with death not to come till it suits their convenience, and hell gives them hardly a moment's terror. Even in the present judgments, they little think what a flood of affliction is coming upon them; having recourse to any alluring lie, they trust to this or that, and sooth themselves with the hopes of a change for the better, without resolving upon their own amendment. They comfort themselves with mere outward appearance and hypocrisy; with false hopes of heaven, whilst they go the broad way to hell. But God threatens them (ver. 17, 18.) that he will sweep away the refuge of lies, and disannul the covenant

with death, as well as their trust in men and huma
covenants; as we read, chap. viii. 12. "Say ye not,
confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall sa
A confederacy," and chap. xxx. 7. "The Egyptians sha
help in vain, and to no purpose." Then it is our dut
in every distress, to take refuge in Christ; so shall we
protected by him in affliction and in death.

My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
Damnation and the dead:
What horrors seize the guilty soul,
Upon a dying bed.

Ling'ring about these mortal shores,
She makes a long delay;
Till, like a flood with rapid force,
Death sweeps the wretch away.

Amazing grace that kept my breath,
Nor bid my soul remove,
Till I had learn'd my Saviour's death!
And well insur'd his love!

MAY XIX.

**Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried ston
a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believet
shall not make haste. When the overflowing scourge sha
pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. Mornin
by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night, and
shall be a vexation, only to understand the report. Isa. xxvii
16, 18, 19.**

Whoever takes refuge in Christ in the time o
trouble, and by true faith humbly rests upon him a
the tried corner stone, shall stand fast, and not ru
here and there for safety, help, and comfort, findin
in Christ every necessary support in affliction, and eve
in death. Most men satisfy themselves with variou
false comforts, and groundless hopes of salvation. T
these God sends an overflowing scourge of trouble
to take away their false dependance, and lead the
to understand the report. Luther says, "Tribulatio
makes good Christians." Rom. v. 3. "For tribulatio
worketh patience;" untried men are inexperienced, vai
useless theorists. What can they know? yet they deceiv

the world. O that our days were free from such speculative deceivers, who are said (chap. xxix. 20.) to watch for iniquity.

See what a living stone
The builders did refuse!
Yet God has built his church thereon,
In spite of envious Jews.

Hosanna to the King
Of David's royal blood;
Bless him, ye saints: he comes to bring
Salvation from your God.

The scribe and angry priest
Reject thine only son;
Yet on this rock shall Zion rest,
As the chief corner stone

MAY XX.

Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you: and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it, and passing over, he will preserve it. Isa. xxx. 18, 19. xxxi. 5.

We read in the 17th verse of a dreadful judgment, when a thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one. In the next we read, "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you;" that is, his judgments and punishments must prevent your false refuge in Egypt, that you may with penitent hearts take refuge in him, and he may then be gracious unto you and succour you. Thus judgments and tribulations are only God's waiting, that he may be gracious unto us: for God is a God of judgment, and does not usually shew mercy, till he hath humbled us by his afflictions! We should therefore in return wait upon God, and continually call upon him; so will he be gracious unto us, and cover us with his wings, as belonging to his spiritual Zion and Jerusalem; he will defend and deliver us, and take care of us in our

churches, our houses, and hearts; like a good father of a family, rectify what is amiss, supply what is wanting, and assist us in all things; for according to Rev. ii. 1. He walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Yet, saith the Lord, if David's race,
The children of my son,
Should break my laws, abuse my grace,
And tempt mine anger down,

Their sins I'll visit with the rod,
And make their folly smart:
But I'll not cease to be their God,
Nor from my truth depart.

MAY XXI.

I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind the back. Isa. xxxviii. 15, 17.

These were the words of king Hezekiah, when God had delivered him from a grievous sickness, and heard his prayer. The Lord will in like manner hear and help us when we are distressed. But we should be principally concerned about the forgiveness of our sins, the deliverance of our souls; not merely about bodily relief. So shall the Lord graciously regard our souls, cast all our sins behind his back, and remember them no more. After this he will relieve our temporal necessities, and deliver us from sickness and other afflictions, or at least render them tolerable, yea beneficial to us. Whenever troubles besets us and continues, we may be assured, that the Lord waits to be gracious unto us, and is preparing to succour us. He only qualifies us by distress for relief, that we may afterward be thankful to him, and in future avoid whatever may occasion the like fatherly correction; for with the best resolution we may soon forget his succour, as Hezekiah (chap. xxxix.) soon after lifted up his heart, when he shewed all his treasures to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon.

When we are rais'd from deep distress,
Our God deserves a song;
We take the pattern of our praise
From Hezekiah's tongue.

Jehovah speaks the healing word,
And no disease withstands;
Fevers and plagues obey the Lord,
And fly at his commands.

MAY XXII.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare *(her burthensome worship)* is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins; *(that is, says Luther, forgiveness of sins and deliverance from the law of Moses, free grace for sin, life for death.)* The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God, Isa. xl. 1, 2, 3.

God will certainly comfort us, if we are his people: therefore we read the word repeated, "comfort ye comfort ye my people." He will likewise cause us to be spoken to comfortably, for he himself is a comforter. He will also forgive our sins, and give us double for our sins; that is, forgiveness and the Holy Ghost; and consequently power over sin, or righteousness and strength. So shall no law either condemn, threaten, or compel us as slaves. But at the same time he points out to us the order in which we must prepare the way of the Lord, by true repentance, humbling every thing exalted within us, confessing our condition as sinners, and desiring only grace; so shall we certainly obtain grace, forgiveness, comfort, and peace. May God give us this repentance unto life!

Dear Lord! behold our sore distress!
Our sins attempt to reign;
Stretch out thine arm of conquering grace,
And let thy foes be slain.

If thou despise a mortal groan,
Yet hear a Saviour's blood;
An advocate so near the throne,
Pleads and prevails with God.

How boundless is our Father's grace,
In height, and depth, and length!
He makes his Son our righteousness;
His Spirit is our strength.

MAY XXIII.

Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new sharp thrashing instrument. *(thou shalt not thrash more straw, it shall yield corn.)* Thou shalt fan them, &c. *(thine enemies)* and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the holy one of Israel. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, &c. I will make the wilderness a pool of water. Isa. xli. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. See chap. xlii. 15, 16.

Though a believer should consider himself but a weak worm, whom the enemy can easily tread upon, yet ought he not to fear. This worm shall become a thrashing instrument which shall scatter the enemy. How is this done? Thus: the enemy steps forth boldly, and means to crush him at one blow. The poor worm twists and bends, but sighs and prays; which an enemy engaged in an unjust cause cannot do. Then the Holy One of Israel fights for it; and it will appear whose is the victory. If we feel ourselves as a dark and dry desert, he will make us springs of water, and turn our darkness into light. Let us therefore be comforted and pray: Lord preserve me, thy worm, scatter the proud enemy, defeat the power of Satan. Let thy light secure us from all darkness, and if we be ever so dry, open thou the fountains of life.

God shall preserve my soul from fear,
Or shield me when afraid;
Ten thousand angels must appear,
If he command their aid.

I cast my burdens on the Lord,
The Lord sustains them all:
My courage rests upon his word,
That saints shall never fall.

MAY XXIV.

A bruised reed shall he not break: and the smoaking flax shall he not quench, &c. I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, &c. I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. ISA. xlii. 3, 6, 7, 16.

THOUGH our faith should be like a bruised reed and smoking flax, Jesus will not wholly break or quench it. He will not do this, for his eyes behold our faith; therefore he will by all means strengthen, and rather inflame than extinguish it. He is set up by God as a light to the Gentiles, consequently to us. He will open our blind eyes, and bring us out of the dark prison; and though we are as ignorant of our way, in spirituals and temporals, as if we were blind, he will lead us in paths which we have not known, he will make darkness light before us, that the grossest darkness and heaviest trial will be for our good, and become a light unto us, that we need not grope in the dark, but may walk in the light of his countenance. These things will he do unto us, and ever go before us as our light, and not forsake us.

Jesus, my God! I know his name,
His name is all my trust;
Nor will he put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.

Then will he own my worthless name,
Before his Father's face;
And in the new Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place.

MAY XXV.

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable and I have loved thee, &c. Fear not, for I am with thee, &c. There is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters, Behold, I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth, shall ye not

know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. Isa. xliii. 4, 5, 13, 16, 19.

God gave this glorious promise to the people of Israel, but still more does it apply to spiritual Israel in the new covenant, and to each faithful soul. We too are precious to God in Christ, if we believe, and shall be honourable, even though we should be afflicted; for God gloriously delivers the afflicted, and saith also unto us, "I have loved thee;" for he hath made us dear and acceptable to himself in Christ his beloved. We therefore need not fear, for the Lord is with us, he will bless us and say of us even at this time, "Bring my sons from far." He himself will work in us every good, and no one shall prevent it, however impossible it may seem. For he who maketh a way in the sea, can do all things; he can convert the wilderness of our hearts, and turn dry lands into springs of waters.

Up to the Lord, that reigns on high,
And views the nations from afar,
Let everlasting praises fly,
And tell how large his bounties are.

Our sorrows and our tears we pour
Into the bosom of our God;
He hears us in the mournful hour,
And helps us bear the heavy load.

MAY XXVI.

Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, &c. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. Isa. xliv. 2, 3, 4, 5.

This promise respects particularly the New Testament, and therefore shall and will certainly be fulfiled in us, provided we are thirsty, or at least wish to be so and pray for it. The Holy Spirit shall be poured out plentifully upon us, as a fountain of life. Lord, fulfil all

these things in us, that we may call ourselves by thy name in our life and conversation; and subscribe ourselves to thee as an eternal heritage, and thus prepared, fear nothing.

See where the great incarnate God
Fills a majestic throne;
While from the skies his awful voice
Bears the last judgment down.

Such favours as a God can give,
My royal grace bestows:
Ye thirsty souls, come taste the streams
Where life and pleasure flows.

I am the first, and I the last,
Through endless years the same,
I AM, is my memorial still,
And my eternal name.

Tormenting thirst shall leave your souls,
And hunger flee as fast;
The fruit of life's immortal tree
Shall be your sweet repast.

The lamb shall lead his heav'nly flock
Where living waters rise;
And love divine shall wipe away
The sorrow of their eyes.

MAY XXVII.

I am the Lord, and there is none else, I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together: I the Lord have created it. *(Therefore)* look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. ISA. xlv. 6, 7, 8, 22.

WE find it repeated no less than eight times in this chapter, that God only is the Lord, and none else, and that he alone doth all things in spirituals and temporals. He inflicts evils, war, sickness, and other plagues, and he alone giveth victory and peace. We should therefore look for every thing from him alone, and ascribe every thing to him. Else all projects of peace, and other means of relief from our distress, will become fruitless.

But if we expect peace, or health, or deliverance from calamities at the hand of God, we must turn to him alone with true contrition, and (chap. xlvii. 7,) lay these things to our hearts, remember our sins, and pray for forgiveness and change of disposition. By these means we shall surely be saved, the heavens will drop down nothing but righteousness unto us, and make us faithful; after which we may depend on temporal aid and peace, health and other blessings, in as great a degree as shall be for the glory of God and our good.

O bless the Lord, my soul!
Let all within me join,
And aid my tongue to bless his name,
Whose favours are divine.

He crowns thy life with love,
When ransom'd from the grave;
He that redeem'd my soul from hell,
Hath sov'reign power to save.

O bless the Lord, my soul!
Nor let his mercies lie
Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without praises die.

MAY XXVIII.

Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors! I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it; for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. Isa. xlvi. 8. xlviii. 8. 9, 10, 11.

In order to obtain spiritual and temporal aid, we must repent; that is, our hearts must be changed: we must therefore look into ourselves, not merely confess gross vices, but the evil heart, the inward corruption; and deeply humbling ourselves before God, acknowledge, that we are transgressors from our mother's womb. We must also seek and pray for a constant supply of grace, in the name, in the blood and merits of Jesus, that the

Lord may be long-suffering and gracious, and help us for his name's sake. And this he will do, though we of ourselves are unworthy of it. If we are afraid that he will leave us, which we have well deserved, our comfort is, that he will help us for his name's sake, lest he and his name should be polluted. But we must remember to ascribe all the glory to him and his name alone, for he will not give his glory to another.

O what a stiff rebellious house
Was Jacob's ancient race!
False to their own most solemn vows,
And to their Maker's grace.

The Lord with indignation heard,
And caus'd his wrath to flame;
His terrors ever stand prepar'd
To vindicate his name.

MAY XXIX.

The Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, &c. and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Isa. xlix. 13, 17, 28.

When Zion imagines herself to be quite deserted and forgotten, as appears ver. 14, God comforts, and assures her, that he will have mercy upon his afflicted, and cannot forget them, though a woman should forget her sucking child; that he has graven them upon the palms of his hands, and that their walls, their spiritual edifice, are continually before him. Therefore their children, or builders, that is, all faithful servants of God, should make haste, but their destroyers, the hirelings and wolves, shall go forth; yea, the time shall come, when kings shall be her nursing fathers, &c. Then it is, that Zion and every faithful soul shall fully experience that the Lord is our God, and they shall not be ashamed that wait for him: for none, no not even one, is put to confusion, that waits for God.

Now shall my inward joys arise,
And burst into a song;
Almighty love inspires my heart,
And pleasure tunes my tongue.

Why do we then indulge our fears,
Suspicions, and complaints;
Is he a God, and shall his grace
Grow weary of his saints?

God on his thirsty Sion hill
Some mercy-drops has thrown;
And solemn oaths have bound his love
To shed salvation down.

MAY XXX.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. I am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man, &c. I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand. Isa. l. 10. li. 6, 12, 16.

When in the day of temptation we walk in the dark, we must quite disregard ourselves, and not rely upon any thing within us, but upon God alone, and upon the name of the Lord; trust only in the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, and adhere to his word, whatever our feelings may be. Our best sensations and gifts may totally vanish from us, but the name of the Lord (the grace of God and righteousness of Christ, both which are comprehended in the name of the Lord) shall be for ever. And this righteousness of Christ will not suffer us to despond. We being justified in Christ, need not harbour a servile fear of God, much less of men. The Lord will comfort us, put his words in our heart and mouth, and cover us under the overspreading shadow of his wings.

Blest is the man, for ever blest,
Whose guilt is pardon'd by his God:
Whose sins with sorrow are confess'd,
And cover'd with his Saviour's blood.

From guile his heart and lips are free,
His humble joy, his holy fear,
With deep repentance well agree,
And join to prove his faith sincere.

MAY XXXI.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satised; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa. liii. 6, 11, 12.

The words, which are thrice repeated here, that the Lamb of God bare our sins, should work in us true repentance, and humble us, when we consider, that the holy, pure and innocent Lamb of God condescended to bear our sin and disgrace, in order to save us. If, like true penitents, we felt the weight of our sins, we should comfort ourselves with this truth so repeatedly enforced, and be assured, that the Lamb of God has borne them and atoned for them, that he has paid for and removed them, and perfectly justified us; so that if we know him and believe in him, we shall not incur any judgment; for we are (ver. 8.) taken from distress and judgment together with him. His intercession too is comfortable to us. Having interceded for malefactors on the cross, he will intercede for us, and prevent our incurring death like criminals, for he was reckoned among the transgressors, and surrendered himself unto death for our sake. This is a comfort on our death-bed.

Like sheep we went astray,
And broke the fold of God;
Each wand'ring in a different way,
But all the downward road.

How glorious was the grace,
When Christ sustain'd the stroke;
His life and blood the shepherd pays,
A ransom for the flock.

JUNE I.

They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinace of their

God, &c. Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. Isa. lviii. 2. lix. 1, 2.

There are many in appearance good sort of men, who are still secure in sin. These, when involved in distress, seek God, but not as penitent sinners; they seek him, as if they had fulfilled all righteousness, or at least not been remarkable sinners, and wonder, perhaps, that God should afflict them, and presume to plead their own cause with God. When their distress is aggravated, they grow desperate, and imagine his hand to be shortened, that it cannot save, and that his ear cannot hear; but their sins are the real cause of separation between him and them. And as every sins adds a stone to this wall of separation, how large, strong, firm, and high must that wall become, and how difficult the conversion, unless we turn from our sins betimes. Hear therefore, O man, and that soon. O that thou mayest be enabled to remove the partition wall this very evening, that thou mayest not be separated from God for ever; but find him here continually near at hand, to assist thee in body and soul.

'Tis faith that conquers earth and hell,
By a celestial pow'r;
This is the grace that shall prevail
In the decisive hour.

When from the curse God sets us free,
He makes our natures clean;
Nor would he send his Son to be
The minister of sin.

JUNE II.

I have set watchmen upon thy wall, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, Isa. lxii. 6, 7.

This promise, which is already, and still continues to be fulfilled, shall be more gloriously completed in the latter day. All the children of God should not only

daily pray for such faithful labourers and watchmen, but themselves also watch over their own heart and house, and not keep silence in making mention of the Lord. All teachers especially should rouse themselves by this, and not be as dumb dogs, it being so frequently repeated, that the watchmen will not keep silence. They must take heed not to be drowsy or asleep; for a sleeping watchman is a contradiction. A teacher thereof must be converted and vigilant, not merely for his own sake, but for the sake of his congregation, whom he should awaken: for till he is truly converted, he continues asleep and insensible of danger, and how should he awaken others? But some, as we read, chap. xxix. 20. watch only for iniquity, by their false doctrine, their works and disputes, hating, oppressing, hindering and troubling other faithful servants of God.

The Lord makes bare his arm,
Through all the earth abroad:
Let every nation now behold
Their Saviour and their God.

How blessed are our eyes,
That see this heav'nly light:
Prophets and kings desir'd it long,
But died without the sight.

JUNE III.

Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth trouble. &c. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word. Isa. lxv. 13, 23. lxvi. 2. See lxi. 6, 8.

Thus in religion, and in the service of God, there are many enjoyments; we, as it were, both eat and drink; therefore God repeatedly calls upon us, Isa. lv. 1. 2. to come and buy and eat, without money. Our poverty shall not exclude us from this; for we read, Psalm xxii. 26. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied." The Lord promises a happy year to the poor, and to comfort all that are afflicted in Sion. He looks graciously upon the poor,

upon these who are of a contrite spirit and tremble at his word, lest they should transgress it; he will dwell in them, and effect every thing in and through them. Nor shall they labour in vain; the Lord will take care to insure their labours, and to bless them, that they may assist in gloriously building up the kingdom of God: for God doth great things by means of the poor and meek.

Let us adore th' eternal word,
'Tis he our souls hath fed:
Thou art our living stream, O Lord,
And thou th' immortal bread.

Our souls shall draw their heav'nly breath,
Whilst Jesus finds supplies;
Nor shall our graces sink to death,
For Jesus never dies.

The manna came from lower skies,
But Jesus from above;
Where the fresh springs of pleasure rise,
And rivers flow with love.

JUNE IV.

Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways. Yet thou sayest, because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me; behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed, &c. JER. ii. 19, 33, 35. iii. 12, 13.

GOD threatens to punish sinners, but they not believing it, must experience it. If therefore various punishments, sorrows and troubles befal us, we should remember to impute them to our disobedience. We must not palliate our actions, and fancy ourselves innocent, as if we had not sinned and deserved our sufferings; lest God should afflict us more severely, till we confess all our sins before him, and turn again to the Lord. Then will God soon substitute mercy in the place of justice; for, says Luther,

"were it possible for the damned in hell humbly to acknowledge their guilt, and sincerely repent, they would obtain mercy."

Mighty Redeemer! set me free
From my old state of sin:
Oh make my soul alive to thee,
Create new pow'rs within.
Renew my eyes, and form my ears,
And mould my heart afresh;
Give me new passions, joys, and fears,
And turn the stone to flesh.
Far from the regions of the dead,
From sin, and earth, and hell,
In the new world that grace has made,
I would for ever dwell.

JUNE V.

Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. Jer. iii. 14. iv. 1, 4, 14. O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? chap. v. 3.

True conversion is necessary to all who would be saved; for all have sinned; it is likewise possible, and in the end easy and pleasant; for Christ is married to him who is converted, he will betroth and bind himself to him: there is nothing difficult or formidable in this, and it should induce all to be truly converted; for every conversion is not of the right sort. Some are partially reformed, leaving off one or the other particular sin, which is attended with mischief and disgrace. Others become converts merely to men, to their pious parents, masters or teachers, and are religious, whilst in their presence. Others again go no farther than Moses and the law. Whereas we should turn from all, even our bosom sins, and that heartily, with our whole heart; we should circumcise the heart and wash it, and evidence that we are actually converted, by a becoming application of Christ; for the eyes of God are upon our faith, that is the most essential part of our conversion, and renders it acceptable.

Great king of glory and of grace!
We own with humble shame,
How vile is our degenerate race,
And our first Father's name.

And can such rebels be restor'd,
Such natures made divine!
Let sinners see thy glory, Lord,
And feel this pow'r of thine.

We live estrang'd afar from God,
And love the distance well;
With haste, we run the dangerous road
That leads to death and hell.

We raise our Father's name on high,
Who his own Spirit sends
To bring rebellious strangers nigh,
And turn his foes to friends.

JUNE VI.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. JER. v. i.

How corrupt must have been the holy city, in which hardly a good man was to be found. The same has been the case with many other cities, now inhabited by the Turks. Other places, where the kingdom of God once flourished, may share the same fate. When the old faithful witnesses depart, a new and perverse generation of teachers may arise, who may overturn every thing. This is the greatest spiritual judgment, and temporal judgments soon follow. But we have an instance in this, how precious the faithful are in the sight of God; since he often spares a whole city, for the sake of only one. Such was that poor wise man, described in Eccles. ix. 15, who delivered a city, yet no man remembered him. Christians, says Luther, bear up the world by their prayer, and are the feet of the world, but are obliged to tread in the filth of profanness. O how criminal is the world, in making a mock at devout Christians. They attack the apple of God's eye. However this word is comfortable in the present judgments; indeed it was particularly so to a cer-

tain Christian in the late distresses of war; God sees more than one among us, who concerns himself about the faith, and steps into the breach by prayer.

By nature all are gone astray,
Their practice all the same;
There's none that fears his Maker's hand,
There's none that loves his name.

Their tongues are us'd to speak deceit,
Their slanders never cease;
How swift to mischief are their feet,
Nor know the paths of peace!

Such seeds of sin (that bitter root)
In ev'ry heart are found;
Nor can they bear diviner fruit,
'Till grace refine the ground.

JUNE VII.

Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return. They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he, neither shall evil come upon us. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. JER. v. 3, 12. vi. 13, 14.

THIS blindness and security prevails also in the midst of our present judgments. God strikes men, but they feel it not; they feel perhaps the blows, the bodily distrees, but are insensible to sin, the evil of their souls, for which they are stricken. They would fain get rid of their troubles, but not of sin, from whence they spring; they continue hardened, and will not turn. They forget that God strikes them, and means to lead them to repentance; they look only upon men; reproaching them and saying, it is not he (our God) he doth it not, the enemy doth it, and he will deliver us from him; evil shall not come upon us, the times will mend; and yet they will not amend themselves. In the midst of this security and delusive hope, the false comforters and preachers of peace come to their aid, then they grow more careless, and

will not suffer their calamity to awaken them to repentance.

When desolation like a flood,
O'er the proud sinner rolls;
Saints find a refuge in their God,
For he redeem's their souls.

Evil shall smite the wicked dead,
But God secures his own;
Prevents the mischief when they slide,
Or heals the broken bone.

JUNE VIII.

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither, let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. JER. ix. 23, 24.

He who values himself upon his wisdom, learning and other endowments, and dispises other men, especially the servants of God, is a proud fool, and will be confounded, with all his pretented wisdom and learning: for the Lord cutteth off the wise in their wisdom. And he who relies upon his strength, might, power, and fortitude, and attributes to himself his exploits, will be confounded: for he robs God of the honour due to him alone, which Jehovah will by no means suffer. The Christian glories only in his Saviour, in his grace and mercy, making him his only wisdom and strength, ascribing to him every mercy, and saying with a great king, All that we have done was thy mercy. This is acceptable to God. Lord, grant that we may acknowledge and praise thee as our gracious and merciful God, depend upon thy grace, and so become perfectly acceptable to thee.

Let others boast how strong they be,
Nor death nor danger fear;
But we'll confess, O Lord, to thee,
What feeble things we are.

Fresh, as the grass our bodies stand,
And flourish bright and gay;
A blasting wind sweeps o'er the land,
And fades the grass away.

While we have breath to use our tongues,
Our Maker we'll adore;
His Spirit moves our heaving lungs,
Or they would breathe no more.

JUNE IX.

There is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O king of nations? for to thee doth it appertain, &c. O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. JER. x. 6, 7, 23.

YES, O my God, thou alone art great; magnify thyself therefore, I beseech thee, in my heart, and make thyself known unto me, as great, exalted, and glorious, that I may fear thee with all my heart, and obey thee. And as I know that the actions and designs of men are not in their own power, do thou lead my steps, in all my ways, in great matters and small, according to thy counsel, and in every design and undertaking, give me understanding and power, for to thee alone doth it appertain to direct my steps. And, as thou knowest my weakness in suffering, strengthen me, I beseech thee, and chastise me, but with mercy, that thou mayest destroy my sins, not me: and that I may, by thy chastisement, the sooner attain to thy salvation.

Shall the vile race of flesh and blood,
Contend with their Creator God?
Shall mortal worms presume to be
More holy, wise, or just than he?

From night to day, from day to night,
We die by thousands in thy sight;
Bury'd in dust whole nations lie,
Like a forgotten vanity.

Behold he puts his trust in none
Of all the spirits round the throne:
Their natures, when compar'd with his,
Are neither holy, just, nor wise.

Almighty power, to thee we bow,
How frail are we, how glorious thou!
No more the sons of earth shall dare
With an eternal God compare.

JUNE X.

And if thou say in thine heart, wherefore come these things upon me? (*Answer*), for the greatness of thine iniquity, are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare. *Therefore the penitent cry.* O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake. Why shouldst thou be as a man astonished, and as a mighty man, that cannot save? We look for peace, and there is no good. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers. Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake. JER. xiii. 22. xiv. 7, 9, 19, 20, 21.

In time of war and other calamities, men are apt to ask themselves: Wherefore come these things upon me? They know not how to account for it, or what fault of theirs is the occasion of it, considering themselves good Christians. But they ought to recollect, that God may answer: "For the greatness of thine iniquity." We should not esteem ourselves innocent, but humbly acknowledge and confess our sins, saying: "Lord! our iniquities testify against us, but do thou save us for thy name's sake;" then shall we enjoy peace and deliverance, and not till then. Though we may hope for peace and deliverence, we can obtain no good, unless we first seek peace with God, and deliverance from our spiritual disorders.

My heart how dreadful hard it is!
How heavy here it lies;
Heavy and cold within my breast,
Just like a rock of ice!

JUNE XI.

If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth; let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee. JER. xv. 19, 20.

This affords both instruction and comfort to preachers and others. The instruction is, that they should adhere to God, teach the good to separate themselves from the

bad, not supposing all their hearers to be the children of God, but shewing them the difference, and having no participation in the works of the ungodly. The comfort is, that God will powerfully protect, and make them a fenced, brazen wall, delivering them from all their enemies, who, instead of bringing them over, shall return to them. But this is likewise a comfort to all Christian masters, magistrates, and parents, who build up the kingdom of God by their life and conversation, and thus incur many enemies. They may persevere comfortably in their labours, their prayers, and their sufferings.

Judge me, O Lord, and prove my ways,
And try my reins, and try my heart;
My faith upon thy promise stays,
Nor from thy law my feet depart.

JUNE XII.

I have taken away my peace from the people, saith the Lord. For behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me. For mine eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from my face, &c. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond. Behold, I frame evil against you, return ye now every one from his evil way. And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices. Jer. xvi. 5, 12, 17. xvii. 1. xviii. 11, 12.

Why should we wonder that God hath taken away peace from us, since every one lives according to the imagination of his evil heart, and acts as if God did not see, or had forgotten his sins? But his eyes are upon all our sinful ways, and sin is engraven with the point of a diamond upon the tablet of the heart. If some sinners did but know the judgment which God is preparing for them, and the evil which shall befal them on account of their sins, they would repent this very evening; but they will not believe. It may be said of their repentance and amendment, "There is no hope." But that which they now refuse to believe, will, by woeful experience, be forced upon them.

Our heart, that flinty stubborn thing,
That terrors cannot move,
That fears no threat'nings of his wrath,
May be dissolv'd by love.

JUNE XIII.

Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. JER. xvii. 5, 7, 8.

HE who relies upon himself, his own wisdom and learning, or upon other men, is accursed. Thus saith the Lord, therefore it will certainly come to pass. Such a man "shall be (v. 6.) like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh;" for he commits idolatry, and robs God of his honour, which God will not suffer to go unpunished. How little do men reflect, that confidence in man is so great and accursed a sin. But how great is the comfort of him who trusteth in the Lord? He is like a tree planted by the waters, his leaves shall not wither, that is, the fruit of his good works shall attend him to eternity. He brings forth fruit without ceasing, inward fruits of the Spirit in his own soul, and fruits in other men; whatsoever he doth it shall prosper.

Trust him, ye saints, in all your ways,
Pour out your hearts before his face;
When helpers fail, and foes invade,
God is our all-sufficient aid.

JUNE XIV.

Wo unto him, that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong, *(by ill gotten goods,)* that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. JER. xxii. 13. *The son of Sirach says,* ECCLES. xxxix 22. He that defraudeth the labourer of his hire, is a bloodshedder.

HE commits a crying sin, Jam. v. 4, in not giving him that which he hath earned with his sweat and blood. But we should at the same time reflect upon Jesus, the great labourer, who laboured in his soul with a bloody sweat, for the sake of our souls; therefore God hath

given him a great multitude as his property, his rewards his beloved lot and inheritance. Who are they that constitute this reward, this property? All those who, by true conversion, come to him, whom the Father hath given him. Hence all pastors should be encouraged to lead many souls to Jesus, as his property, his reward, lest he should require their blood at their hands. But every careless sinner, who refuses to turn from all his sins to Jesus, and to devote himself to him, is a bloodshedder; he defraudeth the Great Labourer of his hire. Let him therefore turn from his sins, and devote himself this very evening to his Saviour, praying with me; O my Saviour, convert me to Thee from all my sins, with all my whole heart, for I desire to be thine, to continue thine alone, and no one's else, here and for ever. Amen.

Deep in our hearts let us record
The deeper sorrows of our Lord;
Behold the rising billows roll
To overwhelm his holy soul.

JUNE XV.

I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. JER. xxiv. 7. See xxix. 13, and xxxiii. 8. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, &c. and I will pardon all their iniquities, &c.

HERE we see how necessary it is that we should turn from all our sins with our whole heart. We must not reserve a single sin, nor make any condition. God requires the heart, the whole heart, for he will not accept a part of it. We likewise see the possibility of such a total surrender of the heart; for God himself will give us an heart to know him, and whoso truly knoweth him, will readily devote to him his whole heart. Here we have a clear promise, "They shall return unto me with their whole heart;" then will God cleanse us from all iniquity, and turn us, that it neither shall condemn us, nor have the dominion over us. We see, in the last place, by what means such a total conversion becomes possible,

and what we are to do on our part. Namely, we are to pray, Turn thou us, O Lord, &c. We are not to content ourselves merely with the devotions of the morning and evening, but frequently to pour out our hearts before God. Then we may hope for success.

How heavy is the night
That hangs upon our eyes,
'Till Christ, with his reviving light,
Over our souls arise!

JUNE XVI.

This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. JER. xxxi. 33, 34.

IN the Old Testament God seemingly compelled the Israelites; there was no willing mind on their part. Therefore God promises (v. 31.) to make a new covenant, under which all the coercive means of the law were to cease, and a willing mind was to be given. We live under the new covenant, under which God himself will write his law in our hearts, and make us willing, that we who are by nature the very reverse of the law, may now have the law itself within us. And we shall all know him, from the least unto the greatest. This is a great and comfortable promise; for we are all of us by nature blind towards God, his love and his grace. But God himself will lead us to this knowledge, which, according to 2 Pet. i. is the means of multiplying grace and peace unto us, and thus render it very possible for us willingly to obey the divine law; for God will not only pardon all our sins, but in his mercy not even remember them any more.

God from the caves of earth and hell
Can take the hardest stones,
And fill the house of Abraham well
With new created sons.

Such wond'rous power doth he possess,
Who form'd our mortal frame,
Who call'd the world from emptiness;
The world obey'd and came.

JUNE XVII.

I will give them one heart, and one way that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they, shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them, to do them good. JER. xxxii. 39, 40, 41.

THIS glorious promise extends to the New Testament, and therefore concerns us. First we see the possiblity of a true repentance, change, and conversion of the heart, or of a genuine fear of God; for God will give us, and work in us, all this, so that man is without excuse. God is called, ch. xxxii. 19, "Great in counsel, and mighty in work;" and as such he saith unto us, v. 27, "Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for me?" Christians are comforted by these words, and pray with great confidence. Yes, O my God, give unto us, one heart, that we and our children may fear Thee for ever; and Thou wilt not fail to do us good, according to thine eternal covenant of grace. Inspire therefore our hearts, and the hearts of our children, with thy fear, that we may not depart from Thee, but may rejoce to do good, and continue thy blessed people for ever and ever. Amen.

Firm as the earth his promise stands,
And he can well secure
What I've committed to his hands
'Gainst the decisive hour

JUNE XVII.

This man seeketh not the welfare of his people, but the hurt. They are not humbled, even unto this day. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine hearts. O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thy-

self in thy scabbard, rest and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the Lore hath given it a charge? JER. xxxviii. 4. xliv. 10. xlix. 16. xlvii. 6, 7.

HE who in times of war, and other calamities, admonishes men to true repentance, warning them of greater punishment and plagues, is considered by the world as one who is unconcerned for the public good, and no true patriot. The children of this world expect nothing but soothing and comfortable words, though they remain unhumble by their distress even unto this day; others rely upon their rocks and castles, their forts and superior power. God will plunge them headlong into ruin. If we wish the sword to be put into the scabbard, and other plagues and troubles to cease, we must look up to the hand of the Lord, and humble ourselves penitently under it; upon this condition, and no other, shall we be saved.

In God most holy, just, and true,
I have respos'd my trust;
Nor will I fear what flesh can do,
The offspring of the dust.

Shall they escape without thy frown;
Must their devices stand;
O cast the haughty sinner down,
And let him know thy hand.

JUNE XIX.

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins. Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heaven. We have transgressed, and have rebelled, thou hast not pardoned. LAMENTA. iii, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42.

O THAT men would not put their confidence merely in man during the distress of war and other troubles, but look up to God, and believe that nothing comes to pass without his command, as David confessed, when Shimei cursed him. We ought to remember that good and evil, distress and deliverance, come only from the Lord. We should not therefore murmur against men, or reproach

them, much less should we murmur against God, for this is only increasing our trouble. Every man should murmur against his sins, and no man should esteem himself innocent; every one should reflect and inquire what it is in him that God designs to punish by the evils of war, or sickness, or other troubles. Perhaps he has been too much lifted up in peaceable times, or in the days of health, and indulged himself in pride, vanity, and luxury, and has been unmindful of, or even perhaps oppressive to the poor, committed much injustice, and sinned in the enjoyment and use of his health.

Lord, where shall guilty souls retire,
Forgotten and unknown?
In hell they meet thy dreadful ire,
In heav'n thy glorious throne.

If o'er my sins I mean to draw
The curtains of the night,
Those flaming eyes that guard thy law,
Would turn the shades to light.

JUNE XX.

And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, &c. I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. EZEK. ii. 6. iii. 17, 18.

All ministers of God's word should duly observe this. God having twice enforced it as a warning to a pious prophet, how much more ought other faithful teachers to consider it as a warning to them. Still more should unconverted teachers tremble at it; for they are in the sleep of death, and not true watchmen; he cannot watch over the souls of others, who doth not watch over his own soul, and thus many souls will perish through his neglect. God requires their blood at his hand. It is evident to the lowest capacity how necessary it is for a teacher to be enlightened and converted for the sake of his congrega-

tion; which truth ought to awaken all teachers, fathers of families, and other persons in authority. Lord, awaken thou both preachers and hearers; and grant, that every one may watch over his own house and heart, so that he may be delivered and saved.

Though I have griev'd thy Spirit, Lord,
His help and comfort still afford;
And let a wretch come near thy throne
To plead the merits of thy Son.

Then will I teach the world thy ways,
Sinners shall learn thy sov'reign grace:
I'll lead them to my Saviour's blood,
And they shall praise a pard'ning God.

JUNE XXI.

Where (*in the temple*) was the seat of the image of jealousy. For they say, the Lord seeth us not. He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Therefore will I also deal in fury, &c. And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof. Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. EZEK. viii. 3, 12. 13, 18. ix. 4, 6.

How many images of jealousy or vexation are seated in the temple of the heart as well as in the outward temple? Men imagine in their abominations, that the Lord doth not see them. Therefore the Lord, at this time, dealeth in fury with many countries, cities, and people; in some places he spares not even those who belong to his sanctuary. O that all preachers and hearers, old and young, might be awakened by this to repentance, and moved first to lament their own sins, and then to mourn over the abominations in the land! for the Lord will, in that case, mark and seal them, that the instruments of divine vengeance may not touch them. Let every one therefore be found earnest in prayer.

My God, in whom are all the springs
Of boundless love, and grace unknown,
Hide me beneath thy spreading wings,
Till the dark cloud is overblown.

JUNE XXII.

Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel. The days are at hand, and the effects of every vision. For I am the Lord; and the word that I speak shall come to pass. EZEK. xii. 22, 23, 25.

WHEN God delays the help he has promised, or the just punishment he has threatened, men are disposed to think that both will fail. When (chap. xiii.) the prophets or teachers say, Peace, and there is no peace; when (ver. 2.) they are daubers who daub with untempered mortar; and (ver. 18.) when they sew pillows to all armholes, then infidelity, false faith, and security, will increase. God denounces a woe against such careless daubers, and false comforters; therefore let every one believe, that what God threatens will come to pass, unless repentance intervene: though, according to chap. xiv. 14. these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in a land, yet they would not be able to turn away the judgments threatened. But the penitent may assuredly comfort himself with the hope of God's promised aid.

O for a word from Sion's King,
Her captives to restore;
Jacob with all the tribes shall sing,
And Judah weep no more.

JUNE XXIII.

When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live, &c. Then washed I thee with water: yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty. But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, &c. EZEK. xvi. 6, 9, 10, 14, 15.

GOD'S dealings with his people Israel extend to the spiritual Israelites, to us Christians. He hath washed us in baptism with pure water, and hath clothed us with a beautiful garment, with Christ himself. But how corrupt are Christians at present! They are fallen off from their

beauty and excellence above the other nations; hence arise the present judgments, in order to punish degenerate Christendom. But to those that humble themselves, and penitently confess that they lie in their blood, and that no man can help them, the Lord saith, even now, Live. It is to thee, even to thee, O penitent sinner, that the Lord saith, at this time, this evening, Live. Jesus will wash, deck, adorn, and render thee beautiful; and then thou mayest safely trust in his beauty, in which he himself delights and rejoices.

Angels, assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold,
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told.

JUNE XXIV.

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy; and they were haughty, &c. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins, &c. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God, Ezek. xvi. 49, 50, 60, 61, 63.

The people at Jerusalem were so corrupt, that God calls Sodom their sister, and even says, that, in comparison with the former, Sodom and Gomorrah appear righteous. Thus if God has distinguished a people by his favours, and they nevertheless depart from him, their sins become greater than the pride of Sodom. And what is the state of things among us? In time of peace we are wanton and luxurious, and neglect the poor; therefore God hath taken away peace from us, in order to punish the rich. But he will still remember his covenant, and turn, forgive, and succour us; then shall we be ashamed: and this shame is the genuine mark of true repentance.

Lord, if thou dost not soon appear,
Virtue and truth will flee away;
A faithful man amongst us here,
Will scarce be found, if thou delay.

JUNE XXV.

The soul that sinneth it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, &c. If the wicked will turn from all his sins, &c. he shall surely live, he shall not die. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, shall he live? *(Therefore)* cast away from you all your transgressions, &c. and make you a new heart and a new spirit, &c. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye. EZEK. xviii. 20, 21, 24, 31, 32.

THUS repentance and conversion are indispensably necessary; for he that sinneth, and doth not turn from his sins, shall die. But after this, daily repentance and conversion, or perseverance, are likewise necessary; for he that turneth away from his righteousness shall also die; all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned. We see, moreover, the nature of true conversion. It must be a genuine repentance and conversion of the heart, and consists not merely in a little outward change, but in a new heart, a new spirit, and a change of the whole mind. By the expression, "Make you a new heart," &c. we are shewn the possibility, else God would not have prescribed it. Nothing, indeed, is possible to us alone, but every thing is, through the power of God; provided that we are enabled to apply ourselves earnestly to the means of grace, and to prayer.

Thou art my God, my only hope;
My God will hear my cry,
My God will bear my spirit up,
When Satan bids me die.

But I'll confess my guilt to Thee,
And grieve for all my sin;
I'll mourn how weak my graces be,
And beg support divine.

My God, forgive my follies past,
And be for ever nigh;
O Lord of my salvation, haste,
Before thy servant die.

JUNE XXVI.

Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I am the Lord your God, walk in my statutes. Nevertheless the children rebelled against me; they walked not in my statutes. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live. EZEK. xx. 18, 19, 21, 25. See Deut. xxxiii. 9. and Matt. x. 7.

IT is common for men, when they are exhorted to true repentance, to plead the example of their forefathers. But because our parents and ancestors have disobeyed God, does it become us to follow their false doctrines, opinions, and manners, and not rather to be governed by the word and command of God. Alas! the children of the present times imitate their vain fathers, and are disobedient to God. And thus the parents sin in their children after their death. O how necessary is it for all parents and teachers to repent and obey God for the sake of their children and hearers; else their posterity will follow them in their disobedience. And this provokes the greatest spiritual judgment, when God suffers them to sink into false doctrine, or to fall into the hands of such teachers as their ears itch after, such as seduce them from the narrow path, from true repentance and the power of godliness. How many are at this time led into such spiritless doctrine, as cannot give them life. Lord, convert both teachers and hearers, parents and children, and preserve us from all corrupt doctrine.

Dear Lord, behold our sore distress;
Our sins attempt to rein;
Stretch out thine arm of conq'ring grace,
And let thy foes be slain.

If thou despise a mortal groan,
Yet hear a Saviour's blood;
An advocate so near the throne
Pleads and prevails with God.

JUNE XXVII.

Her great scum went not forth out of her; her scum shall be in the fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee

and thou wast not purged. Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel, &c. With thy wisdom, and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: thine heart is lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness (*therefore*) I will cast thee to the ground. EZEK. xxiv. 12, 14. xxviii. 3, 4, 17.

THE sins and impurities of some men are so deeply rooted in their hearts, so burnt in, that God is obliged to attack them with severity, and to melt them as with fire. Others, like those of Tyre, value themselves upon their might, their pomp, pride and luxury, fancying themselves wise, and ascribing every thing to their own riches, power, and ingenuity, which they exercise only for amassing treasures by any means, right or wrong. In doing this they collect fuel for the fire; God comes and punishes them dreadfully; for the mighty are mightily punished. O that we may therefore repent immediately, lest our iniquities should become still more deeply rooted, our conversion more difficult, and his future melting fire more hot, as God is at this time purging many cities with fire and sword.

Great Shepherd of thine Israel,
Who didst between the cherubs dwell;
And led the tribes, thy chosen sheep,
Safe through the desert and the deep.

Thy church is in the desert now,
Shine from on high, and guide us through,
Turn us to thee, thy love restore,
We shall be sav'd and sigh no more.

JUNE XXVIII.

Wo be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost. Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them. EZEK. xxxiv. 2, 4, 10, 23.

A PASTOR and teacher should, not only for his own

sake, but for the sake of his flock, be enlightened, converted, and himself be a sheep of Christ's flock, and taste of the right pasture, else he will neglect the sheep, and attend only to his own carnal food. Indeed how can he in every respect duly feed the souls of his sheep, if he doth not feed his own soul? how shall he know the spiritual circumstances of the sheep, as they are here described, and duly attend to them, whilst he continues unconverted, and knoweth not the state of his own soul, nor duly attends to it. But God will require the flock at his hands, and cause him to cease from feeding the flock. Let us devoutly pray for faithful pastors! Lord Jesus, thou art our only shepherd, send unto us soon shepherds after thine own heart to represent thee, who seek not the fleece, but the sheep. Guide and direct us to the best pasture, and grant, that in thee we may find life and perfect enjoyment.

The Lord my shepherd is,
I shall be well supplied;
Since he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want beside.

He leads me to the place
Where heav'nly pasture grows,
Where living waters gently pass,
And full salvation flows.

JUNE XXIX.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them, EZEK. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.

THIS promise, which was given to the people of Israel, applies chiefly to the New Testament dispensation, and so concerns us. We see how possible it is, to be converted with our whole heart, to purify ourselves from all idols and from the love of the world: to acquire a new heart

and to walk in all the commandments of God; for the Lord himself will give us and work in us all these things. Therefore will no man have an excuse on that day for retaining his former hardened heart, and continuing to adhere to his idols, money, wealth, vain honours, and the like. But to the faithful these words are highly comfortable. Yes, O my God, we rely upon these words, and now plead them before thee. Grant us thy Spirit, and soften, renew, and enliven us, that though we should lie like the dry bones of the dead, me may yet at last be full of spirit and life, full of faith and love, and walk in all thy commandments: for thou sayest, "I have spoken it, and performed it," chap. xxxviii. 14.

As rain on meadows newly mown,
So Christ shall send his influence down,
His grace on fainting souls distils,
Like heav'nly dew on thirsty hills.

JUNE XXX.

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to his companions, &c. that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret. *(Prayer, says Luther, is our endless comfort and refuge, and never fails us.)* Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision: then Daniel blessed the God of heaven: Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his. *(How attentive and faithful is God to the prayer of the faithful!)* He changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. *(He fixes the time, how long every Kingdom shall stand, how long every man shall live, and how long every thing shall last. Luther.)* DAN. ii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

ALL kingdoms, and indeed all things are subject to change: and who knows what changes may now be designed in the kingdoms of the world. But the kingdom, which, according to ver. 44, the God of heaven will erect, shall not pass away, but continue for ever. Lord, grant that we may not trust in any thing transitory, but become faithful subjects of thine unchangeable king-

dom, that in all the judgments and changes of the world, we may join fervently with Daniel in prayer, and so endure for evermore.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
Does his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

To him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown his head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise,
With every evening sacrifice.

JULY I.

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. *Therefore*, I Nebuchadnezzar blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. Dan. iv. 17, 34.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR grew proud, and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built, &c. Luther remarks, that the king forgot from whom he had his kingdom. He exalted himself, as if he had obtained all by his own power and understanding, but he found his mistake; before he had finished the words, a voice came down from heaven, and every thing that had been foretold came to pass. He lost his understanding and his kingdom, and did eat grass as oxen, but after seven years he returned to his senses, and then he gave the glory to God alone, acknowledged all he had to be derived from God, and said, by way of warning to all men, particularly great men, "His works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." The ways and judgments of God are right in abasing the proud, as David confesses, Psalm cxix. 71, 75. Lord, preserve us from all haughtiness, that we may attribute all to thee, and give the glory to thee alone.

Once has God's awful voice declar'd,
Once and again my ears have heard,
All power is his eternal due,
He must be fear'd and trusted too.

Make not increasing gold your trust,
Nor set your heart on glittering dust;
Why will you grasp the fleeting smoke,
And not believe what God has spoke?

JULY II.

O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him. Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. We do not present our petitions before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear, O Lord, forgive, O Lord hearken and do, defer not for thine own sake, O my God. DAN. ix. 8, 9, 13, 18, 19.

O THAT all, even the great, would, at this season of spiritual and temporal judgments, humbly confess their sins, like Daniel, and pray; and that no one would except himself? This would be the best means of averting awful judgments. It is one of the greatest sins, now punished by God, that amidst all the terrible judgments which have happened, men do not pray and fly to God for refuge, as if we stood in no need of our God, and could save ourselves; or if we pray, it is not penitently, for grace, forgiveness of sins, and the salvation of our souls, but for temporal aid. In all thy troubles, O man, remember thy sins, confess them to God. First implore forgiveness; for the pardon of sin is of more importance to thee, as it was to the man sick of the palsy, than any temporal help; and when that is obtained, thou wilt find relief both in body and soul.

The God of our salvation hears
The groans of Sion mix'd with tears,
But when he comes with kind designs,
Through all the way his terror shines.

On him the race of man depends,
Far as the earth's remotest ends:
Where the Creator's name is known,
By nature's feeble light alone.

JULY III.

Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. Many shall be purified and made white and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. DAN. xii. 2, 3, 10.

THE ungodly, says Luther, still persist in wickedness, continue as they are, and care not about it; but no one ought to be offended at this. It was always the case. Let us do our own part, amidst sufferings let us purify ourselves, shew ourselves sincere, when tried, and prepare daily for eternal life. We should go on to pray, and work, and strive, and by our life and conversation endeavour to lead others to righteousness; so shall we shine as the brightness of the firmament, &c. Let all teachers, fathers of families, and indeed all the faithful, observe this; for under the new covenant, all are bound to act the part of spiritual pastors in instructing each other, in exhorting, blessing, praying, like Daniel, chap. ix. 20, 21. for the holy mountain of our God. Then shall their prayer soon ascend up to God, and angels shall be their ministers.

Sinners, awake betimes; ye fools be wise;
Awake before the dreadful morning rise;
Change your vain thoughts, your crooked works amend;
Fly to the Saviour, make the judge your friend:
Lest like a lion his last vengeance tear
Your trembling souls, and no deliverer near.

JULY IV.

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction, they will seek me early; saying, Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. HOSEA v. 15. vi. 1, 2.

God frequently smites mankind, till they confess their faults. If he has not yet delivered us from the evils of war, sickness, poverty, &c. it is because many have not yet penitently confessed, that God smote them. Let us therefore in all our troubles soon return to the Lord, and he, who hath smitten us, will heal and bind us up again; and though we should be quite dead, he will, by virtue of his resurrection, revive us, and raise us up to life, even as he rose to life on the third day. "Then," as we read, ver. 3. "shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Death is no more the king of dread,
Since our Emanuel rose;
He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoil'd our hellish foes.

See how the conqueror mounts aloft,
And to his Father flies,
With scars of honour in his flesh
And triumph in his eyes.

There our exalted Saviour reigns,
And scatters blessings down;
Our Jesus fills the middle seat
Of the celestial throne.

Raise your devotion, mortal tongues,
To reach his blest abode;
Sweet be the accents of your tongues
To our incarnate God.

JULY V.

And they have not cried unto me with their heart: They return, but not to the Most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword: the enemy shall pursue him. I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. Woe to them, when I depart from them. Hosea vii. 14, 16. viii. 3, 12. ix. 12.

When men partake of the holy sacrament, and confess their sins, they form resolutions of amendment and holiness. Yet they still continue the same, contenting themselves with the external performance, while their hearts re-

main unchanged; they do not sincerely call upon God, they read a few prayers without any devotion; they fancy themselves converted, but are not; for true conversion begins with the true prayer of faith proceeding from the heart. By this men turn with all their powers from all their bosom sins, their favourite lusts. There are many, who count the doctrine of a true hearty repentance a strange doctrine, and so reject all that is good; hence they are at this time pursued by the enemy, or exposed to some other woe. Lord, assist us in turning to Thee this very evening, from all our sins, with all our heart, and in praying heartily to Thee for this grace!

Why is my heart so far from thee,
My God, my chief delight?
Why are my thoughts no more by day
With thee, no more by night?

But ere one fleeting hour is pass'd,
The flatt'ring world employs,
Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
And to pollute my joys.

JULY VI.

My people are bent to backsliding from me; though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him. How shall I give thee up Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man. HOSEA xi. 7, 8, 9.

WERE God at this time to proceed against men according to the rigour of his justice, he would totally destroy them, because they refuse to turn to him, and despise his warnings. But he is long suffering and merciful, therefore he waits for our conversion; for he is God, and not man. Men would not have patience so long, they would instantly proceed to extremities. We should learn of God to be patient and merciful, even towards the most wicked, and account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation. His mercy and forbearing goodness should

lead all men to repentance, to turn to the Lord, and (v. 10.) to walk after him; for if they persevere in their impenitence and contempt of his word, still more terrible judgments will be denounced against them, and the fierceness of God's anger will be heightened.

When shall the sovereign grace
Of my forgiving God,
Restore me from those dangerous ways
My wandering feet have trod?

Turn, turn thee to my soul,
Bring thy salvation near:
When will thy hand release my feet
Out of the deadly snare?

The tumult of my thoughts
Doth but enlarge my woe;
My spirit languishes, my heart
Is desolate and low.

With humble faith I wait
To see thy face again;
Of Israel it shall ne'er be said,
He sought the Lord in vain.

JULY VII.

Therefore turn thou to thy God: And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance; in all my labours they shall find no iniquity in me, that were sin. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, &c. HOSEA xii. 6, 8. xiii. 9, 12.

GOD still continues calling men to true repentance; but most men, like Ephraim, are become rich, have found them out substance, and know of no sin, from which they should turn and repent. What do you mean by conversion? say they; from what should we be converted? we are neither Heathens nor Turks. Thus they are full of their own righteousness, and blind to their sins; but their iniquity is bound up, and their sin is hid. Therefore God inflicts at present so many judgments and punishments, that men may not count themselves innocent, but penitently confess their sins, and apply to him only, not to man, for help and salvation. Lord Jesus, deliver me from all self-righteousness, even the most refined, and

grant me grace, that clothed with thy righteousness I may enjoy peace.

Why doth the man of riches grow
To insolence and pride,
To see his wealth and honour flow
With every rising tide?

Why doth he treat the poor with scorn,
Made of the self-same clay,
And boast as tho' his flesh were born
Of better dust than they?

Not all his treasures can procure
His soul a short reprieve,
Redeem from death one guilty hour,
Or make his brother live.

Life is a blessing can't be sold,
The ransom is too high;
Justice will ne'er be brib'd with gold,
That man may never die.

JULY VIII.

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him HOSEA xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

WE may judge how necessary true repentance is, from finding it repeatedly enjoined here, and in different parts of the holy Scriptures, more than an hundred times. It is also possible as well as necessary. In order to effect this, God brings troubles upon man. Hence so many countries are at this time fallen by their iniquity, that they may be moved humbly to confess it. God himself prescribes a penitential form of prayer, and bids us say, "Take away all iniquity," &c. We should not apply to men for aid; they are only broken reeds, and aggravate the public distress. Nor should we rely upon the work of our own hands, upon a disciplined army, and make them our gods; but say, "In God the fatherless findeth

mercy;" then he will heal our backslidings, assist us in temporal matters, love us freely, and shew unto us his loving-kindness and eternal salvation.

While I keep silence, and conceal
My heavy guilt within my heart,
What torments doth my conscience feel,
What agonies of inward smart?

I spread my sins before the Lord,
And all my secret faults confess;
Thy gospel speaks a pard'ning word,
Thine Holy Spirit feels the grace.

For this shall every humble soul
Make swift addresses to thy seat:
When floods of huge temptations roll,
There they shall find a blest retreat.

How safe beneath thy wings I lie,
When days grow dark, and storms appear;
And when I walk, thy watchful eye
Shall guide me safe from ev'ry snare.

JULY IX.

Turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth, if he will return and repent. JOEL ii. 13, 14.

HERE we have another exhortation to true repentance, which is particularly necessary, when God threatens his judgments, war and other calamities; for a very terrible day is here denounced in ver. 11. The prophet takes occasion from it to admonish them to repentance, which might avert the threatened evil, as it did at Nineveh. The same admonition shews us the nature of true repentance. We are to turn with all our hearts, and not appear outwardly penitent, as the Jews did, who rent their garments; we should rend our hearts, and entreat God to enable us by true contrition to smite, soften, and change them. As a public day of repentance and prayer is here enjoined, on which all, especially the priests, were to turn and weep and pray; it is much to be wished, that such appointments were now made, since even the Heathens invoked their gods in extraordinary distress. If in the mean

time we call on the name of the Lord (see v. 32.) we shall be delivered in body and soul from all his judgments.

Praise waits in Sion, Lord, for thee,
There shall our vows be paid:—
Thou hast an ear when sinners pray,
All flesh shall seek thine aid.

In answering what thy church requests,
Thy truth and terror shine;
And works of dreadful righteousness
Fulfil thy kind design.

JULY X.

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live. Establish judgment in the gate; it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph. I hate, I despise your feast days and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. Amos v. 14, 15, 21, 23.

Amos was obliged to rebuke the people sharply, and particularly remonstrate with them, that their mere external worship, their feast days, their prayers and songs, were, without repentance, an abomination to God. On this account they opposed him, and even Amaziah the high priest (ch. vii. 10.) accused him to the king, saying, "Amos hath conspired against thee, the land is not able to bear all his words." Yet he persisted in promising them life and the favour of God, if they would only seek good with all their hearts, and not content themselves with mere outward worship. The same is the case now. The faithful servants of God are still accused of various crimes by carnal teachers, and the land is not able to bear all their words, nor to tolerate the truth; they desire not only to hear of comfort, peace, and better times, not to amend themselves. Hence some countries are now reduced to hear and to endure the preaching of cannon, and other plagues. Lord, grant that we may not deceive ourselves with mere external worship, but turn to thee with all our hearts, and serve thee without hypocrisy

Thus saith the Lord, the spacious fields
And flocks and herds are mine,
O'er all the cattle of the hills
I claim a right divine.

Call upon me when trouble's near,
My hand shall set thee free;
Then shall thy thankful lips declare
The honour due to me.

I ask no sheep for sacrifice,
Nor bullocks burnt with fire:
To hope and love, to pray, and praise,
Is all that I require.

JULY XI.

Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land: not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. Behold the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving, &c. not the least grain shall fall upon the earth. Amos viii. 11. ix. 8, 9.

When men do not attend to the word of God, but grow weary of it, God will take his gospel from them, as he hath from many cities and countries. Or he suffers teachers to come, who administer little food to the soul; whence arises a famine of the word of God. They run to and fro, as we read, chap. viii. 12. and shall not find it. Upon which Luther observes, that he who rejects the word of God, shall have it so distant from him, that he shall never find it, though he should earnestly desire it. Wherever a contempt of the word prevails, that state or country is sinking into ruin; yet there will be even among them some faithful servants of God, whom, as being his grain, he will not suffer to fall to the ground and be lost, but turn to their good the persecution they suffer from Satan, and all their other calamities, till they are finally purged and purified.

When God in anger casteth off,
And makes his wrath to smoke
Against the people of his love,
His little chosen flock,

And still, to heighten the distress,
God's presence is withdrawn,
His wonted signs of power and grace,
His power and grace are gone.

JULY XII.

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rocks, &c. Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord. All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border; the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee. OBAD. 3, 4, 7.

In like manner God still brings down the proud. Whoever relies upon his own wisdom or power, or upon his high forts, shall be humbled, and put to confusion. No one is exalted so high, or fortified so strongly, that God cannot bring him down. Let those remember this who inhabit fortified towns. They know not what may befal them. He who trusts in many confederates shall likewise be put to confusion. How many countries have been deceived, overpowered, betrayed, and brought in greater distress by their allies, who did eat of their bread, and whom they sought as their deliverer. We should therefore rely upon nothing but God alone, then shall we be safe both in spiritual and temporal distresses; so shall we exalt ourselves, as the eagle, up to the Sun of Righteousness, and set our nest, our habitation, in heaven, in the heart of God.

O happy nation, where the Lord
Reveals the treasures of his word,
And builds his church, his earthly throne?
His eye the heathen world surveys,
He form'd their hearts, he knows their ways,
But God their Maker is unknown.

Let kings rely upon their host,
And of his strength the champion boast,
In vain they boast, in vain rely;
In vain we trust the brutal force,
Or speed or courage of an horse,
To guard his rider, or to fly.

JULY XIII.

I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. All thy billows and thy waves passed over me. When my soul

fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thy holy temple. Jon. ii. 2, 3, 7.

When we cry unto the Lord, he will likewise answer us, as he did Jonah, and hear and save us, however deeply we may be sunk into ruin, should even all the billows and waves of affliction pass over us. No danger spiritual or temporal is too great for him, he can and will save, even in the extremity of distress, as a stone, when thrown to the greatest possible height, begins to fall. A simple but pious man said, "When thou thinkest, it is all over with thee, then thy Saviour comes to thy assistance." This have all the faithful often experienced. Lord, strengthen our faith, and grant, that when our hope is feeble, we may not quite despair, but pray fervently, and receive deliverance from thee.

Death and the terrors of the grave,
Stood round me with their dismal shade;
While floods of high temptation rose,
And made my sinking soul afraid.

Temptations fled at God's rebuke,
The blast of his Almighty breath;
He sent salvation from on high,
And drew me from the depths of death.

With speed he flew to my relief,
As on a cherub's wing he rode;
Awful and bright as lightning, shone
The face of my deliverer, God.

JULY XIV.

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not. Jon. iii. 10.

The prophet Jonah was ordered to preach to the city of Nineveh, that in forty days it would be overthrown. The people believed it, and repentance was preached. And the king caused it to be proclaimed, that they should fast, and cry mightily to God, and that "every one (ver. 8.) should turn from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands:" and it came to pass, that God did not destroy them. God still threatens us in his word; he

hath warned us by earthquakes; he hath carried off many thousands by his late judgments, and caused many countries and cities to become desolate, and seems to threaten still greater judgments. O that Christians would, after the example of Heathens, believe the threats and warnings of God, and solemnise public acts of repentance! O that high and low would turn to the Lord; this would be the best means of procuring peace, for without repentance all projects of peace will be fruitless. O my God, if the careless part of mankind will not turn to thee, grant that we may turn to thee more heartily, work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and offer up fervent prayers for other men.

When God, provok'd with daring crimes;
Scourges the madness of the times,
He turns the field to barren sand,
And dries the river from the land.

The righteous with a joyful sense,
Admire the works of Providence;
And tongues of Atheists shall no more
Blaspheme the God that saints adore.

Yet if the humbled nation mourns,
Again his dreadful hand he turns;
Again he makes their cities thrive,
And bids the dying churches live.

How few with pious care record,
These wond'rous dealings of the Lord;
But wise observers still shall find,
The Lord is holy, just, and kind.

JULY XV.

He *(our Saviour)* shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. Thine hand shall be lift up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed. Mic. v. 4, 9. vii. 11.

This promise, though already fulfilled, extends to the whole time of the New Testament, and all that we read, chap. iv. 1, 2, 7. shall still be accomplished in the last days: the mountain of the Lord, the kingdom of God

shall be higher than all the mountains, when the prophecy in Dan. xi. 44, 45. shall be accomplished. The word of God shall spread more and more, his kingdom shall be gloriously propagated, and the enemies of his church shall be scattered and put to flight. This is the prayer of all the servants and children of God. And the Lord will even at this time give us victory over all our spiritual enemies, sin, the world, and the devil; he will keep our walls in his sight, and build us up on himself. We should therefore not despair, either in our private troubles, or under the corruptions of the church, but go on with prayer and labour, and so contribute towards a future reformation. Assist us we beseech thee, O Lord.

Great God, whose universal sway,
The known and unknown worlds obey,
Now give the kingdom to thy Son,
Extend his power, exalt his throne.

With power he vindicates the just,
And treads th' oppressor in the dust;
His worship and his fear shall last,
Till hours, and years, and time be past.

JULY XVI.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? the good man is perished out of the earth, &c. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen, and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity. Mic. vi. 8. vii. 2, 4.

It hath been shewn also to us what is good, namely, to keep the word of God; so that we are without excuse. Yet men will not hear of keeping the word and commandments of God, as if the thing were impossible or needless. The righteous among the Jews were gone; they are daily decreasing among us, and are mocked by the wise and proud men of the world. Such haughty mockers are like a brier, who can only prick with their writings and discourses, and will not hearken to zealous preachers. But how soon may the day of their visitation come, when

God shall cause repentance to be preached to them by formidable enemies or other judgments. Then will the careless be in great perplexity. Lord, help us to keep and practise thy word, to humble ourselves before thee, that, when thy terrible watchmen shall come, we may find refuge in thee.

Who shall ascend thy heav'nly place,
Great God, and dwell before thy face?
The man that minds religion now,
And humbly walks with God below

He loves his enemies, and prays
For those who curse him to his face,
And doth to all men still the same
That he could hope or wish from them.

Whose hands are pure, whose heart is clean,
Whose lips still speak the thing they mean;
No slanders dwell upon his tongue,
He hates to do his neighbour wrong.

JULY XVII.

The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies, NAHUM i. 3, 7, 8.

No fort is too strong. If we rely on our fortifications or other strength, we may be humbled by some fresh distress, and at last fall into the extremities of danger. In all our distress, spiritual or temporal, we should penitently take refuge in Jesus, and humbly confess our sins before him, for in his sight no man is innocent. Then will he be long-suffering and gracious to us, and overcome all our enemies, particularly the spiritual enemies of our souls. For he is great in power to save us. He will certainly deliver us, when our danger and perplexity is at the utmost. He can make a path in the sea and the storm. He will be our stronghold in the day of trouble; for he knoweth all them that put their trust in him. Assist us therefore, O Lord, that instead of coming our-

selves innocent, we may rely upon thy holiness and grace, as manifested in Jesus Christ, may be free from guilt, and receive comfort in death.

Exalt the Lord our God,
And worship at his feet;
His nature is all holiness,
And mercy is his seat.

Oft he forgave their sins,
Nor would destroy their race;
And oft he made his vengeance known,
When they abus'd his grace.

When Israel was his church,
When Aaron was his priest,
When Moses cry'd, and Samuel pray'd,
He gave his people rest.

Exalt the Lord our God,
Whose grace is still the same:
Still he's a God of holiness,
And jealous for his name.

JULY XVIII.

We shall not die: O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment, and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. HABAK. i. 12. ii. 4. See iii. 14.

IT is our concern to pray, when enemies invade, or other judgments befal us, that we may not die, but that God would turn it to an wholesome paternal chastisement, and that (chap. iii. 2.) in wrath he would remember mercy. We must not be obstinate, disobedient, self-willed, faithless, and impatient, but learn to wait for the promised salvation, else we shall have neither rest nor comfort in our troubles. For the just shall live by his faith. By faith we are justified, and obtain life; we should therefore pray more and more earnestly for faith and a living knowledge of Christ. For, according to chap. ii. 14. "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." This remains to be accomplished. He who is just in faith, will not commit injustice in his life; whence we read, chap. ii. 6. "Wo to him that increaseth that which is not his."

If burning beams of noon conspire
To dart a pestilential fire;
God is our life, his wings are spread
To guard us with a healthful shade

But if the fire, or plague, or sword,
Receive commission from the Lord
To strike his saints among the rest,
Their very pains and deaths are blest.

JULY XIX.

It shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees, *who, as Luther says, sit as undisturbed as wine, which is not to be drawn off, and mock the threatenings of the prophets. Therefore* seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be, ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. ZEPH. i. 12. ii. 3.

THE terrible day of judgment, namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, was very near, but men believed not the prophets, and were quite secure. Our present security and mockery is also a mark of the latter evil days, and of the terrible judgments. It is a comfort, however, that God here exhorts the humble, who keep his commandments, to seek righteousness and meekness, that is, to become continually more righteous and meek; so shall they be hid on the terrible day. God still searches them as it were with candles. He knows who is careless, and who feareth his word. The former shall perish in the judgments, or fall into great anxiety and terror; the latter shall be preserved and comforted. For they are not "haughty (chap. iii. 11.) because of his holy mountain." but humble themselves; and the Lord (ver. 15.) "hath taken away their judgments," and prevented their spiritual and temporal enemies from doing them any harm.

When the great Judge supreme and just,
Shall once inquire for blood,
The humble souls that mourn in dust,
Shall find a faithful God.

JULY XX.

And the people did fear the Lord. Then spake Haggai, &c. I am with you, saith the Lord. Be strong all ye people of the land.

saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. Fear ye not. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. From this day will I bless you. HAGG. i. 12, 13. ii. 4, 5, 7, 19.

WHEN the Israelites returned from Babylon, every one hastened to his own house, and the house of the Lord lay desolate. Therefore God withdrew from them every temporal blessing, and he that "earned wages (ver. 6.) did put it into a bag with holes." Then said the prophet, "Consider your ways." Upon this the people feared the Lord, and he gave them assurance twice, "I am with you." Then they built the house of the Lord, and from that day God again gave them temporal blessings. If we seek first the kingdom of God, every temporal good shall happen to us, else we may chance to put our money into a bag with holes. Let us therefore labour confidently in the spiritual house of our own souls and the souls of other men, fearing nothing; for as Christ, the consolation of the Gentiles, came to the second temple, and made it more glorious than the former; how much more will he come to the house and temple of our hearts, and be our sovereign comfort.

If God to build the house deny,
The builders work in vain:
And towns, without his wakeful eye,
An useless watch maintain.

Short be your sleep and coarse your fare:
In vain till God has blest:
But if his smiles attend your care,
You shall have food and rest.

Before the morning beams arise,
Your painful work pursue,
And till the stars ascend the skies,
Your tiresome toil renew.

Nor children, relatives, nor friends,
Shall real blessings prove,
Nor all the earthly joys he sends,
If sent without his love.

JULY XXI.

For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her. He that toucheth you,

toucheth the apple of his eye. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord, ZECH. ii. 5, 8, 10. See ver. 13.

THE church of the New Testament is interested in this promise, which was given to the temporal Israel and Jerusalem. "The Lord is in the midst of her," Psalm xlvi. So likewise will the Lord be a wall of fire round about us, who fear him; he will encamp about us, like the angel of the Lord, with his fiery chariots and horses, and manifest himself gloriously in the midst of us, even in our hearts. He will put an end to the power of our enemies, the enemies of his church, and no more suffer us to be touched, than the apple of his eye. We should therefore rejoice, and firmly believe, that he will dwell with us. Whence he always repeats, "Thus saith the Lord." He is raised up (ver. 13.) out of his holy habitation, and will at length gloriously rebuild his city and his church. Lord, come quickly with thy salvation.

How honourable is the place,
Where we adoring stand;
Zion the glory of the earth,
And beauty of the land!

Trust in the Lord, for ever trust,
And banish all your fears:
Strength in the Lord Jehovah dwells,
Eternal as his years.

Lift up the everlasting gates,
The doors wide open fling;
Enter, ye nations, that obey
The statutes of your king.

JULY XXII.

If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. (*Angels, says Luther, protect and guide pious people, more especially ministers.*) Behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon one stone shall be seven eyes; and the branch shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. ZECH. iii. 7, 2, 9. vi. 12.

THE servant *Zemah*, or the Branch, is Christ, and he is the stone, which God hath hewn out by death, by which Christ merited for us the seven eyes, that is, the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit. Then shall we grow like grass, he built up the spiritual house of God, and assist in building it. The foundation of this growth and building is this, that God hath in one day taken away the sins of the world through Christ, and the more we continue in him, the more shall we experience growth, edification, and the protection of the holy angels, which is an especial comfort to faithful teachers.

The Lord reveals his face,
And smiling from above,
Sends down the gospel of his grace,
Th' epistles of his love.

These sacred words impart
Our Maker's just commands;
The pity of his melting heart,
And vengeance of his hands.

Hence we awake our fear,
And draw our comfort hence;
The arms of grace are treasur'd here,
An armour of defence.

JULY XXIII.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, &c. ZECH. iv. 6, 7, 10.

ZERUBBABEL was to build the temple, and the enemy's power was as great as a mountain before him. God promises to support him, not by an army, but by his Spirit, and the great mountain was to become a plain. It was not to be reduced to a little hill, which, though some obstacle, might be surmounted, but it was to be a plain, a smooth way, which might be passed with ease. So that the seeming hindrance would rather forward, as the great mountain of the adverse Persian monarchy, in the time of Cyrus and other kings, promoted the building of the temple. Now Zerubbabel was a type of Christ, to

whom, when he built his spiritual temple, all the great mountains, his enemies, death and hell, were forced to give way. In like manner the greatest mountains shall still become a plain before us, and the greatest hindrances of the kingdom of God shall, in and through us, promote it. If the building prospers in such times as these, we should not despise these days of small things. The seven lamps, mentioned ver. 2. and the seven eyes of God, belong to us also.

This northern isle, our native land,
Lies safe in the Almighty's hand,
Our foes of vict'ry dream in vain,
And wear the captivating chain.

Pillars of lasting brass proclaim,
The triumphs of th' eternal name;
While trembling nations read from far
The honours of the God of war.

He builds and guards the British throne,
And makes it gracious like his own;
Makes our successive princes kind,
And gives our dangers to the wind.

Thus let our flaming zeal employ
Our loftiest thoughts and loudest songs;
Britain pronounce with warmest joy
Hosanna from ten thousand tongues.

JULY XXIV.

I will encamp about mine house. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty? Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids. I will strengthem them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord. Zech. ix. 8, 17. x. 12.

Whoever is content with dry morality, and external works of the law, is still in a barren desert. But he who feels the gospel as the power of God, and draws all his strength from his name, the blood and the wounds of Jesus, will bring forth fruit in himself and in others; he will beget spiritual children, which is the duty of the faithful, who should all assist by their life and conversation in building the kingdom and house of God. Lord, assist us in doing this, for we belong to thine house. Be

thou a camp round about us, and strenthen us with thine heart-cheering gospel, that we may walk joyfully in thy name, and propagate thy truth.

Shout to the Lord, and let our joys
Thro' the whole nation run;
Ye British skies, resound the noise
Beyond the rising sun.

Thy power the whole creation rules,
And on the starry skies
Sits smiling at the weak designs
Thine envious foes devise.

In vain the busy sons of hell
Still new rebellions try,
Their souls shall pine with envious rage,
And vex away and die.

Thee, mighty God, our souls admire,
Thee our glad voices sing,
And join with the celestial choir,
To praise th' eternal king.

Thy scorn derides their feeble rage
And, with an awful frown,
Flings vast confusion on their plots,
And shakes their Babel down.

JULY XXV.

In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, &c. I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. ZECH. xii. 8, 10. xiii. 1. xiv. 9.

THESE glorious promises concern the New Testament, and having been fulfilling ever since the time of Christ and his apostles, affect us also, who appertain to the new spiritual Jerusalem and Zion. How much more will they be gloriously accomplished in the last times, when "at evening time it shall be light," and "living waters shall go out!" We read such another promise in

Isa. xxx. 25, 26. So that at that time there shall be one Lord, one flock, and one Shepherd, and no more separation. Lord, strengthen our faith, and awaken us more to prayer and unwearied labour, that we may co-operate towards future reformation.

Lord, in the morning thou shalt hear.
My voice ascending high;
To thee will I direct my prayer,
To thee lift up mine eye.

Thou art a God, before whose sight
The wicked shall not stand;
Sinners shall ne'er be thy delight,
Nor dwell at thy right hand.

JULY XXVI.

The priests' lips should keep knowledge, &c. He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver. MAL. ii. 7. iii. 3. Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still, &c. Wo to the idol shepherd, that leaveth the flock. ZECH. xi. 15, 16, 17.

THE greatest of God's judgments is, when he punishes the ingratitude and disobedience to his word, by sending foolish idol shepherds, who make gold or their belly their God, carnally feed themselves, instead of feeding the sheep, and so seek the fleece instead of the flock. O that God would at this time purge and purify the children of Levi, the priests and Levites, and those who wish to become such. Such lips alone as are purified and anointed by the Holy Ghost, are qualified to keep the doctrine; as St. Paul says, keep that which is committed to thee by the Holy Ghost. He who is not so qualified, is only a wrangler, and, notwithstanding his zeal, may seduce from the pure doctrine and from the narrow path. Lord, thou art as the fire of the goldsmith, and as the soap of the fuller. O melt and refine me from the dross of sin, and purify all present and future teachers, and grant that the present judgments may answer this purpose.

Lord, when iniquities abound,
And blasphemy grows bold;
When faith is hardly to be found,
And love is waxing cold;

Is not thy chariot hast'ning on?
Hast thou not giv'n this sign?
May we not trust and live upon
A promise so divine?

Yes, saith the Lord, now I will rise,
And make oppressors flee;
I will appear to their surprize,
And set my servants free.

JULY XXVII.

The Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. MAL. iii, 16, 17, 18.

IN ver. 13. God saith, their words were stout against him, in saying it is vain to serve God, and there is no profit in keeping his ordinances. The faithful ought to take this comfort, that all their sighs are recorded in a book of remembrance, and that God will distinguish betwixt them and the wicked. For he will kindle a fire against these, and leave them neither root nor branch. But he will spare the good, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise upon them. From the beginning to the end of the Bible God makes this distinction, and will manifest it in his present judgments, as well as on the last day. Let the careless take this as a warning, and sin no more. There is no difference, we are all poor sinners. We are so by nature, but the faithful shall attain grace, righteousness, and holiness. And they have this consolation, that God will remember all their troubles, and spare and protect them during all his judgments.

O God, my refuge, hear my cries,
Behold my flowing tears;
For earth and hell my hurt devise
And triumph in my fears.

O were I like a feather'd dove,
And innocence had wings;
I'd fly and make a long remove,
From all these restless things.

In thee most holy, just and true,
I have repos'd my trust;
Nor will I fear what man can do,
The offspring of the dust.

JULY XXVIII.

Thou hast wrought not only those things, but also the things which fell out before, and which ensued after. Yea, what things thou didst determine were ready at hand. Thy power standeth not in multitude, nor thy might in strong men; for thou art a God of the afflicted, a Saviour of them that are without hope. I pray thee, king of every creature, hear thou my prayer. And make every nation and tribe to acknowledge, that thou art the God of all power and might, and that there is none other that protecteth the people of Israel but thou. JUDITH ix. 5, 11, 12, 14.

ALL nature is at thy command. Thy word must be obeyed, and the thoughts which thou inspirest must be executed. Lord, grant that we may ever pray with the same humility and faith, and never swell our minds with presumptuous confidence, for arrogant presumption is at all times offensive to thee. O that all potentates with their armies would trust in thy mercy and power alone, and give the glory only to thee, then thou wouldst soon grant them victory.

Blest is the nation where the Lord
Hath fix'd his gracious throne,
Where he reveals his heav'nly word,
And calls their tribes his own.

Kings are not rescued by the force
Of armies from the grave;
Nor speed nor courage of an horse
Can the bold rider save.

God is their fear, and God their trust,
When plague or famine spread;
His watchful eye secures the just,
Amidst ten thousand dead.

JULY XXIX.

Froward thoughts separate from God; and his power when it is tried, reproveth the unwise. For wisdom is a loving spirit, and will not acquit a blasphemer of his words; for God is witness of his reins, and a true beholder of his heart, and a hearer of his tongue. For the ear of jealousy heareth all things, &c. Therefore beware of murmuring. WISDOM i. 2, 6, 10, 11.

WHEN God punishes proud conceited men, they learn that their conceit was mere folly, since it turns to their own hurt. But the greatest folly of all is that of maliciously persecuting and ridiculing the children and servants of God. Such persecutors are void both of wisdom and the Holy Ghost; and how should they either teach others as they ought, or keep the doctrine themselves? they will consequently do much mischief and increase the number of scoffers. But they shall not go unpunished. For however they may dissemble before men, or pretend zeal for the pure doctrine, God knows their wicked hearts and designs. Whoever therefore would escape misery, let him take heed not to mock and insult the servants and children of God, nor call doctrines which proceed from God the inventions of Satan.

Help, Lord, for men of virtue fail,
Religion loses ground;
The sons of violence prevail,
And treacheries abound.

Their oaths and promises they break,
Yet act the flatterer's part;
With fair deceitful lips they speak,
And with a double heart.

If we reprove some hateful lie,
How is their fury stirr'd?
Are not our lips our own, they cry,
And who shall be our Lord?

JULY XXX.

Let our strength be the law of justice; for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous; because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings; he upbraideth us with our offending

the law, and objecteth to our infamy the transgressions of our education. He is grievous unto us even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. We are esteemed of him as counterfeits; he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness; he pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boast, that God is his father. WISDOM ii. 11, 12, 15, 16.

THE case is still the same. The children of this world will do what they list, and despise him who doth not conform to them, which we may particularly observe among young men at universities, in the army and navy. They lie in wait for the righteous and good, and can hardly bear the sight of them, because the lives of the righteous differ from theirs, which is a silent rebuke, and smites their consciences. Lord, grant that we may rebuke the wicked by our lives and conversations, but chiefly by the former, and that we may abstain from their ways as from filthiness. Defend us from all their devices, and let us experience that the end of the just is blessed, and that we are sure of a safe refuge in thee, our father, either in time of trouble, or in the hour of death.

Lord, crush the serpent in the dust,
And all his plots destroy:
While those that in thy mercy trust
For ever shout for joy.

The men that love and fear thy name,
Shall see their hopes fulfill'd;
The mighty God will compass them
With favour as a shield.

JULY XXXI.

Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness, before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This is he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints? Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, &c. We have

wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness, &c. What hath pride profited us? or what good has riches with our vaunting brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow. WISD. v. 1—9.

HERE the poor worldlings call good men fools, who know not how to live in the world, nor to acquire riches and honour. But the time will soon come when they shall call themselves so. For is it not folly to confine our prudence to this short transitory existence, to hunt after wealth, honours, and pleasures, and not remember a future state? What can these things profit us in death? and how much less will they profit after death? If the world laugh at us, let us have patience; they mock not us, but God, whose cause ours is. We shall stand before their face in great boldness. A young man, who was ridiculed for his piety, was so strengthened by these words, that he disregarded the scorn and scoffs of the world.

O God of grace and righteousness,
Hear and attend when I complain;
Thou hast enlarg'd me in distress,
Bow down a gracious ear again.

Ye sons of men, in vain ye try
To turn my glory into shame;
How long will scoffers love to lie,
And dare reproach my Saviour's name?

AUGUST I.

After this cometh night, but vice shall not prevail against wisdom. Give me wisdom that sitteth by the throne, and reject me not from among the children. O send her out of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory, that being present she may labour with me, that I may know what is pleasing unto thee. Thy counsel who hath known, except thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit, from above? For so the ways of them which lived on the earth were reformed, and men were taught the things that are pleasing unto thee. WISD. vii. 30, ix. 4, 10, 17, 18.

How necessary is this prayer for true wisdom! For he who doth not pray in this manner, is an unwise man, though he may be possessed of much learning and worldly

wisdom, nay, even with great knowledge of divinity; if he be void of this wisdom from above, and of the Holy Spirit, none of his ways are right, and he knoweth not what is pleasing unto God. But no cunning or malice shall overpower him who hath this wisdom; he will labour and be blessed in doing what is well pleasing to the Lord. Lord, let thy wisdom so influence my heart and conduct, that I may be blessed abundantly in all things.

Lord, I have made thy word my choice,
My lasting heritage:
There shall my noblest powers rejoice,
My warmest thoughts engage.

I'll read the histories of thy love,
And keep thy laws in sight;
While through the promises I rove
With ever fresh delight.

'Tis a broad land of wealth unknown,
Where springs of life arise;
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
And hidden glory lies.

AUGUST II.

Thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight. Thou hast mercy upon all; for thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend. For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldst thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it. But thou sparest all: for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls. Therefore chastenest thou them by little and little, that offend. Wisd. xi. 20, 23, 24, 26. xii. 2.

O THAT the great potentates of the world were lovers of the lives of men, and would spare them, then the Lord might spare and pity them also. O my God, have mercy upon us, and pardon our sins. Grant that we may amend, and inspire us with the firm conviction, that thou hast created nothing for thy hatred and wrath, but that men bring thine anger upon themselves. Preserve us according to thy good pleasure, and grant that we may experience that thou measurest and weighest all our necessities and all our help, that we may find thee a merciful lover of souls in thy kind paternal treatment of us.

High in the heavens, eternal God,
Thy goodness in full glory shines;
Thy truth shall break through every cloud,
That veils and darkens thy designs.

For ever firm thy justice stands,
As mountains their foundations keep:
Wise are the wonders of thy hands,
Thy judgments are a mighty deep.

Thy providence is kind and large,
Both man and beasts thy bounties share,
The whole creation is thy charge,
But saints are thy peculiar care.

AUGUST III.

For so much then as thou art righteous thyself, thou orderest all things righteously: thinking it not agreeable with thy power to condemn him, that hath not deserved to be punished. But thou, ministering thy power, judgest with equity, and orderest us with great favour. For if thou didst punish the enemies of thy children, &c. with such deliberation, giving them time and place, whereby they might be delivered from their malice? with how great circumspection didst thou judge thine own sons, &c. that we should carefully think of thy goodness, and when we ourselves are judged, we should look for mercy. WISD. xii. 15, 18, 20, 21, 22.

GOD, being judge of all the world, will do injustice to no man. Though his judgments may here be incomprehensible to us, hereafter we shall see things clearly. Order us, O Lord, with tenderness, govern us with great mercy, and let the judgments and plagues which befal wicked men, serve for our chastisement, warning, and humiliation; but grant that we may trust in thy mercy, not mistake thee, depend more firmly on thy grace and pity, and not sink into unbelief and despair.

When men grow bold in wicked ways,
And yet a God they own;
My heart within me often says,
Their thoughts believe there's none.

What strange self-flattery blinds their eyes?
But there's a hast'ning hour;
When they shall see with sore surprise
The terrors of thy power.

Thy justice shall maintain its throne,
Though mountains melt away;
Thy judgments are a world unknown,
A deep unfathom'd sea.

From thee, when creature streams run low,
And mortal comforts die,
Perpetual springs of life shall flow,
And raise our pleasures high.

AUGUST IV.

But thou, O God, art gracious and true: long-suffering, and in mercy ordering all things. For if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy power: but we will not sin, knowing that we are counted thine. For to know thee, is perfect righteousness: yea, to know thy power is the root of immortality. WISD. x. 1, 2, 3.

IN like manner Christ saith, John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal," &c. Grant us, O God, a living knowledge of thee and thy dear Son, that through this knowledge we may arrive at perfect righteousness, and have in us the root of eternal life. Alas: we know thee too little; enlighten us with thy Holy Spirit, that we may see thy kindness, thy truth and patience, and believe that thou wilt order us, as thou dost all things, with mercy, so that if we should sin through infirmity, we may yet remain thy children. Let us not abuse this unto licentiousness, but let us the more cautiously avoid sin, that as thy children, we may have a filial fear, love, and confidence in thee.

The heavens declare thy glory, Lord,
In every star thy wisdom shines:
But when our eyes behold thy word,
We read thy name in fairer lines.

Great Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Bless the dark world with heav'nly light;
Thy gospel makes the simple wise,
Thy laws are pure, thy judgments right.

The rolling sun, the changing light,
And days and nights thy power confess;
But the blest volume thou hast writ
Reveals thy justice and thy grace.

Thy noblest wonders here we view,
In souls renew'd and sins forgiv'n:
Lord, cleanse my sins, my soul renew,
And make thy word my guide to heav'n.

AUGUST V.

Blessed be God, that liveth for ever, and blessed be his kingdom. For he doth scourge and hath mercy; and he will scourge us for our iniquities, and will have mercy again. Blessed are they which have been sorrowful for all thy scourge; for they shall rejoice for thee, when they have seen all thy glory, and shall be glad for ever. Let my soul bless God, the great king. Tob. iii. 1, 2, 5, 14, 15.

When God seemeth to be angry, in chastising us, it is not wrath, but mercy and goodness; and though during his chastisement our sins are a heavy pressing weight, yet they are all forgiven, and we are blessed, if we call upon the name of the Lord. Lord, grant that we, who fear thee, may believe and experience in our hearts, that thou wilt comfort us in all our tribulation, and finally deliver us.

The Lord, how wond'rous are his ways,
How firm his truth, how large his grace.
He takes his mercy for his throne,
And thence he makes his glory known.

Not half so high his power has spread
The starry heavens above our head,
As his rich love exceeds our praise,
Exceeds the highest hopes we raise.

Not half so high hath nature plac'd
The rising morning from the west;
As his forgiving grace removes
The daily guilt of those he loves.

How slowly doth his wrath arise?
On swifter wings salvation flies;
And if he lets his anger burn,
How soon his frowns to pity turn.

Amidst his wrath compassion shines,
His strokes are lighter than our sins;
And while his rod corrects his saints,
His ear indulges their complaints.

So fathers their young sons chastise,
With gentle hands and weeping eyes;
The children weep beneath the smart,
And move the pity of their heart.

AUGUST VI.

My son, be mindful of the Lord thy God all thy days, and let not thy will be set to sin, or to transgress his commandments. Give alms of thy substance, &c. Do that to no man which thou hatest. Bless the Lord thy God alway, and desire of him that thy ways may be directed; and that all thy paths and counsels may prosper. And fear not, my son, that we are made poor: for thou hast much wealth, if thou fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is pleasing in his sight. TOB. iv. 5, 7, 15, 19, 21.

THESE are excellent paternal lessons. O that all fathers would, by their life and conversation, thus exhort their children, and that children would hearken to them. Let parents and children examine themselves this evening, read the fourth chapter of Tobit, and join in prayer. Lord, grant that all of us, old and young, may be mindful of thee all our days, have thee in our hearts and before our eyes continually, and not give ourselves up to any sin. Grant that we may have pity upon the poor, preserve us from pride, from doing to others that which we hate, and incline us to do all things with prayer, and to avoid every unbelieving anxiety.

Come, children, learn to fear the Lord,
And that your days be long,
Let not a false or spiteful word
Be found upon your tongue.

Depart from mischief, practise love,
Pursue the works of peace;
So shall the Lord your ways approve,
And set your souls at ease.

His eyes awake to guard the just,
His ears attend their cry:
When broken spirits dwell in dust,
The God of grace is nigh.

AUGUST VII.

He will scourge us for our iniquities, and will have mercy again. Therefore see what he will do with you, and confess him with your whole mouth. In the land of my captivity do I praise him, and declare his might and majesty to a sinful nation. O ye sinners, turn and do justice before him; who can tell if he will accept you, and have mercy on you? TOB. xiii. 5, 6.

When God chastises sinners by sickness, poverty, war, or other distress, it is all in mercy, and intended to lead them to the knowledge of their sins, and to true repentance, to humble them truly, and turn them from an earthly mind, from covetousness and other sins. Hence many are at this time spoiled of their goods, or carried away prisoners of war or hostages into foreign countries. They and their friends should, under these calamities, consider what may be the design of God, and wherein they have sinned. For men without trouble grow careless and blind to their sins. To such are addressed the words, "O ye sinners, turn;" for all affliction should lead us to true repentance, and to the more serious practice of true Christianity. If we set about this, we shall praise and bless God even in affliction, as the Swedish prisoners once did in Siberia, because God had converted many of them during their trouble.

Amidst thy wrath remember love,
Restore thy servant, Lord,
Nor let a Father's chast'ning prove,
Like an avenger's sword.

My sins a heavy load appear,
And o'er my head are gone
Too heavy they for me to bear,
Too hard for me t' atone.

Thine arrows stick within my heart,
My flesh is sorely prest;
Between the sorrow and the smart
My spirit finds no rest.

All my desire to thee is known,
Thine eye counts every tear,
And ev'ry sigh and ev'ry groan
Is notic'd by thine ear.

AUGUST VIII.

My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thine heart aright, and constantly endure, &c. Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayest be increased at thy last end. Ye that fear the Lord, believe him, and your reward shall not fail; hope for good, and for everlasting joy and mercy. Look at the generations of old,

and see, did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise that called upon him? For the Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and very pitiful, and forgiveth sins, and saveth in time of affliction. Ecclus. ii. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11.

All true Christians should bear these comfortable words continually in mind, for a suspicious heart is always fearing the worst, but we should ever hope and expect the best from our good God; temptations and sufferings should not weaken, but exercise and strengthen us. We should consider the examples of the faithful of old. There is not an instance from the beginning of the world of any one forsaken or despised, who called upon God. How unlikely is it that he should begin with us!

What sore temptations break my rest,
What wars and struggles in my breast,
But through thy grace that reigns within,
I guard against my darling sin.

That sin that close besets me still,
That works and strives against my will;
When shall thy Spirit's sovereign power
Destroy it that it rise no more.

With an impartial hand; the Lord
Deals out to mortals their reward,
The kind and faithful souls shall find
A God as faithful and as kind.

AUGUST IX.

The greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favour before the Lord. For the power of the Lord is great, and he is honoured of the lowly. Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength. For many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and an evil suspicion has overthrown their judgment. A stubborn heart shall fare evil at the last; and he that loveth danger shall perish therein. In the punishment of the proud there is no remedy; for the plant of wickedness hath taken root in him. Ecclus. iii. 18, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28.

Pride and arrogance will overthrow a man, be he ever so great and powerful, they will produce much

trouble and sometimes even bloodshed. But in divines this haughty arrogance is the most mischievous; for in other cases it is injurious only to the body and worldly goods, but here the soul is damaged. Hence so many dangerous errors, controversies and schisms, and the vineyard of the Lord is often rooted up by wild boars. Our comfort is, that when these proud spirits attack the children and servants of God, they run headlong, and will infallibly plunge themselves into ruin. They cannot succeed, for God doth great things only by means of the humble.

Why do the proud insult the poor,
And boast the great estates they have,
How vain are riches to secure,
Their haughty owners from the grave.

They can't redeem one hour from death,
With all their wealth in which they trust,
Nor give a dying brother breath,
When God commands him to the dust.

There the dark earth and dismal shade
Shall clasp their naked bodies round;
That flesh, so delicately fed,
Lies cold and moulders in the ground.

My Saviour shall my life restore,
And raise me from my dark abode;
My flesh and soul shall part no more,
But dwell for ever near my God.

AUGUST X.

They that serve her, shall minister to the holy one; and them that love her, the Lord doth love. Whoso giveth ear unto her, shall judge the nations, &c. At the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul, and try him by her laws. Then will she return the straight way unto him, and comfort him. Be not ashamed to confess thy sins. Ecclus. iv. 14, 15, 17, 18, 26.

He who desires Christ, the heavenly wisdom, to love and comfort him, must first love and obey his word, turn from all his sins, not reserving one; then shall he receive a pure spirit. As men do not at once confess and

renounce their sins, but, like David, reserve and retain some, wisdom will strike terror into them by her corrections, as she did into David's bones. And she repeats her scourges, till they become sincerely penitent, like David, and confess their sins; in which case God will forgive them all, and even rejoice and quicken them.

Raise thee, my soul, fly up and run
Through every heav'nly street,
And say there's nought beneath the sun
That's worthy of thy feet.

Bright like a sun the Saviour sits,
And spreads eternal noon;
No ev'nings there, nor gloomy nights,
To want the feeble moon.

But, O what beams of heav'nly grace,
Transport them all the while,
Ten thousand smiles from Jesus' face,
And love in every smile.

Jesus, and when shall that dear day,
That joyful hour appear,
When I shall leave this house of clay,
To dwell amongst them there?

AUGUST XI.

Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened unto thee? for the Lord is long-suffering, he will in no wise let thee go. Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day. Number not thyself among the multitude of sinners, but remember that wrath will not tarry long. Ecclus. v. 4, 7. vii. 16.

It is great folly to put off our conversion a day or an hour, but much greater to put it off from day to day; for we cannot depend on the next day, nor even the next hour. How many, alas! are now in hell, who have delayed their conversion, and been surprised by a sudden death! Every delay makes it more difficult and hazardous; for sin is ever taking deeper root. And how foolish is it to draw comfort from numbers, and so hope to escape with impunity. If we sin with a multitude, we shall be punished with them. The large and careless crowd is walking the broad way to hell, to everlasting punishment.

Blessed God! let us not defer our conversion one hour, but turn to thee this very evening, and enable us to beg of thee repentance, grace, and forgiveness.

Lord, how secure my conscience was,
And felt no inward dread,
I was alive without the law,
And thought my sins were dead.

My hopes of heav'n were firm and bright;
But since the precept came
With a convincing power and light,
I find how vile I am.

I'm like a helpless captive sold
Under the power of sin:
I cannot do the good I would,
Nor keep my conscience clean.

AUGUST XII.

Blessed is the man that keepeth him in wisdom, and exerciseth himself in understanding. She shall heap the treasure of mirth and joy upon him, and give him an everlasting name to heritage. Foolish men will not take hold upon her, &c. for she is far from pride and deceit. Praise is not seemly in the mouth of the ungodly, for he is not sent of the Lord. For of God cometh wisdom, &c. and the Lord shall give her unto him. Ecclus. xiv. 22, xv. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

It belongs to right teaching, that we properly divide and apply the word, and give to every one his portion. But this requires wisdom, and consequently true conversion and the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. It also requires true humility of heart. For wisdom, as we read here, "is far from pride;" as indeed Solomon says, "with the lowly is wisdom." Now he who is proud, and void of wisdom, cannot, however learned he may be, teach wisely or rightly in all respects, though he may sometimes utter a truth. For he understands not even what belongs to himself, and doth not apply it to himself; how shall he understand and apply what belongs to every one of his hearers? O let us pray for upright faithful teachers.

When I have learn'd my Father's will,
I'll teach the world his ways;
My thankful lips, inspir'd with zeal,
Shall loud pronounce his praise.

While sinners do thy gospel wrong,
My spirit stands in awe;
My soul abhors a lying tongue,
But loves thy righteous law.

AUGUST XIII.

How great is the loving-kindness of the Lord our God, and his compassion unto such as turn to him in holiness. He hath mercy on them that receive discipline. Humble thyself before thou be sick, and in the time of sins shew repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vows in due time, and defer not until death to be justified. Before thou prayest prepare thyself; and be not as one that tempteth the Lord. Think upon the wrath that shall be at the end; from the morning until the evening the time is changed. Ecclus. xvii. 29. xxiii. 14, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26.

Men sin on carelessly, presuming on grace and mercy, but such will be recompensed with disgrace; for though the mercy of God be great, it is towards them that listen to instruction, and turn to him. Therefore let no one put off repentance and conversion to the bed of sickness. He may be suddenly taken away, or should he be visited with sickness, he may not retain his senses; the apparent repentance of a deathbed may be only a sigh extorted from him by the fear of hell, which will leave him in anxious uncertainty about the reality of his conversion. Let us remember the anguish and terror of God's wrath, which we may feel in the hour of death, and turn to the Lord and serve him, and that soon; for in the short space of time between evening and morning it may be said, "Time shall be no more."

The mighty God, the wise and just,
Knows that our frame is feeble dust;
And will no heavy loads impose,
Beyond the strength that he bestows.

He knows how soon our nature dies,
Blasted by every wind that flies;
Like grass we spring, and die as soon,
Or morning flow'rs that fade at noon.

But his eternal love is sure
To all the saints; that shall endure:
From age to age his truth shall reign,
Nor children's children hope in vain.

AUGUST XIV.

He that hath small understanding, and feareth God, is better than one that hath much wisdom, and transgresseth the law of the Most High. And the perfection of the fear of the Lord is wisdom. The heart that is established by advised counsel, shall fear at no time. And they that remain shall know, that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord, and that there is nothing sweeter than to take heed unto the commandments of the Lord. Ecclus. xix. 24. xxi. 11. xxii. 16. xxiii. 27.

Prudence without piety is not true prudence, but cunning. Such men regard not the word of God, which alone makes us wise unto salvation, but follow their own lusts. Their way is smooth, or according to ch. xxi. 10. it is "made plain with stones, but at the end thereof is the pit of hell." But to fear God is wisdom and assurance through that word which is sure. There we stand fast, and fearing God, as his children, need not fear any thing else; but may in all circumstances stand undaunted and comforted. Posterity may learn from hence, that there is nothing better, nothing sweeter, nothing happier, than the fear of God; for whoso feareth God, him can no man overthrow.

The men that keep thy law with care,
And meditate thy word,
Grow wiser than their teachers are,
And better know the Lord.

How doth thy word my heart engage?
How well employ my tongue?
And in my tiresome pilgrimage,
Yields me a heavenly song.

AUGUST XV.

Whoso feareth the Lord, will receive his discipline, and they that seek him early shall find favour. He that seeketh the law, shall

be filled therewith: but the hypocrite will be offended thereat. A sinful man will not be reproved, but findeth an excuse according to his will. Ecclus. xxii. 14, 15, 17.

The earlier a man is led to God, in the true fear of him, the sooner and more abundantly will he find favour, the more easy and pleasant will be his conversion, and the happier Christian will he become. But he must apply to it in good earnest; for the reason why many men miscarry, is that they are not in earnest; and then all hearing and teaching of the word only renders them worse, as may be observed in many vain teachers and students of divinity. Such will not bear reproof, but avail themselves, by way of comfort, if the bad example of other men. But they are referred to the word of God and Christ, not to the example of vain men, for they shall be judged by the word of God: and no bad example, not even of the teachers, magistrates, and parents, will excuse them.

My soul repeat his praise,
Whose mercies are so great;
Whose anger is so slow to rise,
So ready to abate.

God will not always chide;
And when his strokes are felt,
His strokes are fewer than our crimes,
And lighter than our guilt.

Nor shall affliction's rage,
Too long oppress the saint;
The God of Israel will support
His children, lest they faint.

AUGUST XVI.

He that believeth in the Lord taketh heed to the commandment. He that hath no experience knoweth little. When I travelled I saw many things, and I understood more than I can express. The spirit of those that fear the Lord shall live, for their hope is in him that saveth them. Whoso feareth the Lord shall not fear, nor be afraid, for he is his hope. Ecclus. xxxii. 24. xxxiv. 10. 11, 13, 14.

What a blessed thing is the true fear of God. It preserves us from all error, it suffers us not to be arrogant,

but humble, and consequently wise. It leads us to pray, to place all our hope in the divine aid, and then we need fear nothing, neither men nor seducing spirits; but he who is void of the fear of God, and therefore unwise. proud, and haughty, is led by an erroneous spirit, however learned he may be: for they only have the true spirit, and attain to the right doctrine, who fear God. Lord, grant us an humble heart, which may rely on thee, preserve us from all error in life and doctrine, and be thou our trust, that we need not fear any thing.

The haughty sinner have I seen,
Not fearing man nor God,
Like a tall bay tree, fair and green,
Spreading his arms abroad;

And lo, he vanish'd from the ground,
Destroy'd by hands unseen;
Nor root, nor branch, nor leaf was found
Where all that pride had been.

But mark the man of righteousness,
His several steps attend;
True pleasure runs through all his ways,
And peaceful is his end.

AUGUST XVII.

Do not the tears run down the widow's cheeks? and is not her cry against him that causeth them to fall? He that serveth the Lord shall be accepted with favour, and his prayer shall reach unto the clouds. The prayer of the humble pierceth the clouds; and till it come nigh, he will not be comforted; and will not depart, till the Most High shall behold. Ecclus. xxxv. 15, 16, 17.

How bitterly will the tears of widows and orphans cry against some hard, unjust, and unmerciful men, so that an unmerciful judgment will befal them. Luther said, he had rather have powerful emperors and kings against him than one Christian who sighed and prayed against him. How powerful then is the fervent prayer, which is offered up not against, but for others and ourselves. It will certainly pierce the clouds, and not cease till God beholds and sends help. O Lord excite us to such a faithful, fervent, and importunate prayer, for us, for our friends

and thy whole church; that tears, prayer, and supplication may be our armour, whereby we may obtain a succession of victories and blessing for ourselves and thy church.

Let sinners and their wicked rage
Be humbled to the dust;
Shall not the God of truth engage
To vindicate the just.

The cruel persecuting race
Must feel his dreadful sword;
Awake, my soul, to praise the grace
And justice of the Lord.

AUGUST XVIII.

When I was yet young, or ever I went abroad, I desired wisdom openly in my prayer, I prayed for her before the temple, and will seek her out even to the end. I stretched forth my hands to the heaven above, and bewailed my ignorance of her. I directed my soul unto her, and I found her in pureness; I have had my heart joined with her from the beginning, therefore shall I not be forsaken. Ecclus. li. 13, 14, 19, 20.

How happy would young persons be, if they would pray for true wisdom at an early period, and turn to the Lord in the days of their youth, like young king Josiah! the Lord would hear them and be their friend throughout life. But we must earnestly wrestle for it, lift up our hands, and pray, then shall we be enlightened, and know our folly, our sinfulness, and the Saviour of sinners, whereby our illumination will be complete. He whose prayer is not so earnest, as to lead him to a sense of his own folly and sin, is not yet enlightened or wise, though he may be ever so learned; the sense of our folly is the beginning of our light and wisdom; how can he write or speak of light, who has not yet seen the first glimmerings of it. He is blind and deceives himself. Lord, enlighten us, that we may know our folly, and turn to thee soon, this very evening.

My God permit my tongue,
This joy, to call thee mine;
And let my early cries prevail,
To taste thy love divine.

The shadow of thy wings,
My soul in safety keeps;
I follow where my father leads,
And he supports my steps.

AUGUST XIX.

How happeneth it, Israel, that thou art in thine enemy's land? Thou hast forsaken the fountain of wisdom. For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou shouldest have dwelled in peace for ever. My children suffer patiently, &c. Be of good cheer, O my children, cry unto the Lord, and he shall deliver you from the power and hand of the enemies. For my hope is in the Everlasting, that he will save you, and joy is come unto me from the Holy One, because of the mercy which shall soon come unto you from the Everlasting, our Saviour. BARECH iii. 10, 12, 13. iv. 20, 21, 22.

In time of war and other troubles, men must be patient, and immediately endeavour to discover and confess their sins, for they are the cause of their misfortunes. They have forsaken the fountain of wisdom, and have not walked in the way of God; they have in particular laid aside their humility, else they might have dwelt in peace for ever, and have escaped other distresses which God uses to humble them and bring them to a penitent sense of their sins. We should therefore in our trouble think penitentially upon our sins, and in the first place implore true repentance, grace, and remission of sins, that our troubles may draw and convert us to the Lord, and we may become his dutiful children. Then may we in faith solicit *temporal* aid, and the *Everlasting*, our Saviour, will soon shew us his mercy.

My watchful enemies combine
To tempt my feet astray:
They flatter with a base design
To make my soul their prey.

Lord, crush the serpent in the dust,
And all his plots destroy:
While those that in thy mercy trust,
For ever shout for joy.

AUGUST XX.

And thus consider ye throughout all ages, that none that put their trust in him shall be overcome. It is no hard matter for many to be shut up in the hands of a few; and with the God of heaven it is all one to deliver with a great multitude, or a small company. For the victory cometh from heaven, and standeth not in the multitude of an host. The Lord himself will overthrow them before our face. 1 MACCAB. ii. 61. iii. 18, 19, 22.

How weak soever we may find ourselves against our spiritual and temporal enemies, if we trust in God alone, are resigned, and only desire that his will may be done, he will give us victory. But in this faithful resignation we must not be presumptuous, and concerned for our own cause or honour, but for God's. For in chap. v. 57. two captains said, "Let us get us a name;" but they were slain, because (ver. 61, 62.) they thought to do some valiant act, and were not of the seed of those, by whose hands deliverance was given unto Israel. And (ver. 67.) certain priests, desirous to shew their valour, were slain. Thus God putteth ambition and arrogance to confusion at all times. Yet vain-glory is at present the queen of the world, and the honour and cause of God are quite forgotten.

Just are thy ways, and true thy word,
Great rock of my secure abode;
Who is a God beside the Lord?
Or where's a refuge like our God?

'Tis he that girds me with his might,
Gives me his holy sword to wield;
And while with sin and hell I fight,
Spreads his salvation for my shield.

AUGUST XXI.

For it is not a light thing to do wickedly against the laws of God; but the time following shall declare these things. For not as with other nations, when the Lord patiently forbeareth to punish, till they be come to the fulness of their sins, so dealeth he with us, lest that being come to the height of sin afterwards, he should take vengeance of us. 2 MAC. iv. 17. vi. 14,

THE Israelites, and even the priests, followed the heathen games (chap. iv. 14, 15, 16,) and God sent these heathens, whose games they imitated, to punish them, and then we read, "It is not a light thing to do wickedly against the laws of God." We also should attend to this; for how many games, dances, and vanities have we borrowed from a certain nation? wherefore God hath sent them to punish us, and though we have beaten them, he hath soon healed their wounds, because we no sooner take breath, than we spend our time, especially in winter, in games, operas, plays, and vanities, and in the spring we take the field again, after so bad a preparation. Hence God at this time imbitters our sinful diversions, and connives at us no longer, but puts a stop to sin by his punishments. If any one escape with impunity, and grow secure, to him may be applied the words of chap. vii. 35. "Thou hast not yet escaped the judgment of Almighty God, who seeth all things."

Thus saith the high and lofty one,
I sit upon my holy throne;
My name is God, I dwell on high;
Dwell in my own eternity.

When I contend against men's sin,
I make them know how vile they've been;
But should my wrath for ever smoke,
Their souls would sink beneath the stroke.

O may thy pard'ning grace be nigh,
Lest we should faint, despair and die,
Thus shall our better thoughts approve
The methods of thy chast'ning love.

AUGUST XXII.

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us. MAT. i. 23. See Isa. vii. 14. viii. 10.

BY the incarnation of the Son of God, God is with us, men, and even with the greatest sinners for their conversion; how much more is he with the faithful! Now if God be with and for us, who can be against us? Nay he is not only with us, but in us too, and hath pitched

his tent within us, as it is written, Behold the tent or tabernacle of God is among men, and he will dwell among them, and they themselves shall be his people, and he himself, God with us, will be their God. For, though we be miserable sinners, that will not prevent him; on the contrary, for that very reason, he is with us as our Immanuel, and Jesus who saves us from our sins. Were we not great sinners, we should not need so great a Redeemer, who is God himself. The name Immanuel, like the name of Jesus, ought to be our watchword, our comfort under every evil, in our spiritual and temporal warfare. At the approach therefore of an enemy, a battle, or other distress, we should cry out, Here is Immanuel. Lord, impress thy name of Jesus and Immanuel deeply upon our hearts, that it may be to us a balsam, and a strong fort, which may administer comfort and help to us in distress and in death.

Hail, great Immanuel, all divine,
In thee thy Father's glories shine:
The brightest, sweetest, fairest one,
That eyes have seen or angels known.

AUGUST XXIII.

Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our father. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. MATT. iii. 2, 7, 8, 9, 10.

JOHN, by preaching repentance, prepares the way for Christ; he points out to every one his particular bosom sin, and chiefly to the Pharisees, who thought they had no need of repentance, on account of the decorum of their conduct, and boasted of their father Abraham; yet as they brought forth no fruits meet for repentance, they were in danger of being hewn down and cast into the fire. Repentance is necessary for men of the gravest character, for it is not merely abstinence from gross sins, but a change of heart and mind. The true penitent wilt re-

nounce his bosom sin, else we boast in vain that we are Protestants without faith, without the mind and works of a true Protestant, we shall be cast into the fire. And alas! of how many men and places may it be said, that the axe is laid to the root of the tree, fire, sword, or death, are at hand. Now necessary is true repentance of heart, to guard us against being deceived by mere external appearance.

O if my soul was form'd for woe,
How would I vent my sighs;
Repentance should like rivers flow,
From both my streaming eyes.

'Twas for my sins my dearest Lord
Hung on the cursed tree;
And groan'd away a dying life,
For thee, my soul, for thee.

AUGUST XXIV.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. MATT. iv. 17.

THE kingdom of heaven appertains to those who repent. And the first mark of repentance is poverty of spirit; whence Jesus saith, chap. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." John preached repentance, Jesus preaches it here, and so did his apostles afterward. Thus true repentance is necessary for all, and the beginning of it is to acknowledge ourselves poor miserable sinners, depraved by nature, and totally void of any righteousness or worth of our own; to confess our nakedness, to drop all the fig leaves of vain excuses and false comforts, to lay only our poverty, our wants before God, to accuse ourselves and plead guilty of all our sins, seeking mercy from Christ alone. If we do this, we are blessed, and the kingdom of heaven is ours. This poverty of spirit is both the first and the last foundation laid in the heart; the faithful are more and more grounded in poverty of spirit, the nearer they approach to their consummation. If we are

deficient in this poverty of spirit and humility of heart, our repentance is not begun, and the most learned and grave character is no better than a proud Pharisee.

Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace;
No wanton lips nor envious eye,
Can see or taste the bliss.

These holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admittance there,
But followers of the Lamb.

AUGUST XXV.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. MAT. v. 4.

AFTER the penitent has discovered his poverty, and his sinful misery, the next step is, to mourn, to possess our minds with godly sorrow; for by this godly sorrow and anguish of soul, sin and the world are imbittered to us, the evil hard heart is attacked, cast down, and broken, softened, amended, and changed; it is taken off from all self-righteousness and every false comfort, and prepared to receive true comfort; for Jesus is come to comfort them that mourn, them that mourn in Sion; not them that feel only a worldly sorrow, but who mourn and are dejected on account of their sins; they only, and none else, shall be comforted and lifted up; for the Lord raises up all those that are cast down, and they shall be blessed. He therefore, who hath no godly sorrow for his sins, is an impenitent unhappy man. Let every one pray for genuine poverty of spirit, and for a mournful broken heart on account of his sins; let him guard against false comfort, and not rest, till God comforts and lifts him up, which comfort will not fail.

Blest are the men whose bowels move,
And melt with sympathy and love;
From Christ the Lord shall they obtain
Like sympathy and love again.

AUGUST XXVI.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. MATT. v. 6.

WHEN we feel our poverty, and are thus divested of our own riches, our own righteousness, and mourn with godly sorrow for our sins, then shall we desire, hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ, and the comfort and peace it contains; and this hunger and thirst constitutes the third point essential to repentance. A faithful soul will gladly quit the rags of his own righteousness, and desire only to be found in Christ, and to cover himself with his righteousness, and will offer nothing to God, but Christ and his blood. This desire, this hunger and thirst, is itself blessedness, for it results from faith, and ends in fulness. Such a soul shall be filled, if not soon, yet in due time, and shall experience what is said by David, Psal. xxii. 26. and by Mary Luke i. 53. Lord Jesus, take from me entirely mine own righteousness, let me hunger only after thine, and obtain at all times, particularly in the hour of death, food and raiment, shelter, and plenty for my soul, that I may rejoice before thee evermore.

How rich are thy provisions, Lord,
Thy table furnished from above,
Thy fruits of life o'erspread the board,
The cup o'erflows with heav'nly love.

AUGUST XXVII.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. *The world endeavours to possess the earth, and defend property by violence, but Christ tells us, that the meek shall inherit the earth. Luther.* Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. MATT. v. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10.

THEY therefore, who are not possessed of meekness mercy, and a pure heart; are not blessed. Let eve one examine himself this evening, and he will find ca

for repentance, and to pray for remission of sins, and for the Holy Spirit, that he may work in him all these essential parts of true Christianity; then he will have the comfortable hope of salvation, he will become a child of God, an heir of the kingdom of heaven, and goodness and mercy will follow him all the days of his life.

Bless'd are the meek, who stand afar
From rage and passion, noise and war;
God will secure their happy state,
And plead their cause against the great.

AUGUST XXVIII.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, &c. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, &c. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven. MATT. v. 13, 14, 16.

ALL Christians, especially teachers and heads of families, should be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, and should enlighten others by their lives; they must therefore themselves be enlightened and converted, else they will be unsavory salt, and blind guides. How shall such men season others and preserve them from perdition? Can the blind lead the blind? are the words of Christ himself. Nor must they conceal the good, through fear of men, but let their light shine, that men may see their good works, and praise not them, but their father which is in heaven. How can an unconverted man or teacher do this? For what good works has he? How necessary therefore is it for teachers to be enlightened and converted, for the sake of their congregations, whom they are to instruct and convince by their own practice, that what they teach is possible. Every child may comprehend this.

The gospel bids the dead revive,
Sinners, obey the voice and live:
Dry bones are rais'd and cloth'd afresh,
And hearts of stone are turn'd to flesh.

May but this grace my soul renew,
Let sinners gaze and hate me too:
The word that saves me does engage
A sure defence from all their rage.

AUGUST XXIX.

I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Beware of false prophets, &c. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven. MATT. v. 20. vii. 15, 21.

THE law requires something more than a mere outward pharisaical righteousness; therefore Christ affirms, ch. v. that he who is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment, and that he who looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Hence we should, in order to arrive at true repentance, look into the law, and we shall find it spiritual, punishing the evil desires and thoughts of the heart and spirit. Then will the Spirit of God lead us to poverty of spirit, to mourning, divest us of self-righteousness, we shall hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ, and obtain justification by faith, together with inward righteousness and holiness of life, that we may do the will of God. Without this, even a teacher is like the foolish man, who built his house on the sand.

No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of thy Son.

Now for the love I bear his name,
What was my gain I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to his cross.

AUGUST XXX.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. MATT. vii. 11, 12.

How admirably are the law and the gospel here connected! God will attend to our prayer and give us all good things, this is gospel; and we are enjoined to do

unto our neighbour whatsoever we would that he should do unto us, this is law. Now, O my God, if we being evil can give good gifts unto our children, how much more wilt thou our kind Father in heaven, who art love and goodness itself, give us every good gift, and especially the Holy Spirit, that most essential gift, which we now beg at thy hands. And if it be thy will that we perform what we promise, thou wilt perform and keep what thou hast promised to us; that is, thou wilt hear our prayer, which thou hast promised and sworn. O grant us therefore thy Spirit, the Spirit of faith and love, that we may do to other men whatsoever we would that they should do unto us. Impress this deeply on our hearts, since it is the law and the prophets.

Yes, Lord, I'll still on thee depend,
My father sure will prove my friend;
And 'tis a pleasure to be poor,
And live on thine exhaustless store.

All that is good thou canst supply,
And put all threat'ning evil by:
I'll trust to thy paternal care,
Nor want, nor harm, nor danger fear.

AUGUST XXXI.

Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, shall be saved. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not ye therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. MATT. x. 22, 29, 30, 31. xi. 12.

HE who would be truly converted, must through assisting grace be in earnest and use violence, he must take the kingdom of God by force, and earnestly strive to enter in at the strait gate; for there is no trifling with the word of God. He who is not in earnest, will grow worse. The hatred of the world will be no obstacle to him who is in earnest. He will confess Christ freely before the world, and not fear, though he should be

hated, mocked, and persecuted; for not a sparrow, not a hair from our heads, can fall to the ground without God, for he hath numbered all our hairs. These words have been highly comfortable to many persecuted Christians in their imprisonment.

Yes, Lord, thy children may depend
On thy paternal care:
Thou wilt the father and the friend
In every thing appear.

With open hand and liberal heart,
Thou wilt their wants supply:
To them thy benefits impart,
And no good thing deny.

SEPTEMBER I.

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, &c. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Take heed, and beware of the leaven (*the hypocrisy*) of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees. MATT. xv. 8, 9, 19. xvi. 6.

MANY content themselves with mere outward worship, and draw nigh to God with their lips, not with their hearts; these are Pharisees and hypocrites. Others neither hear nor read God's word, but are profligate, bold scoffers, and libertines; these are the Sadducees of our days, who in their hearts believe not a resurrection. Both abominations, hypocrisy and profaneness, arise from men's not rightly knowing their own hearts. He who would truly repent, be justified and saved, let him beseech God to give him a true knowledge of his own heart; for from this impure fountain springs every evil. Murder, theft, perjury, and blasphemy, all reside in the heart. O that hypocrisy and open profaneness had not gained access to persons of learning and distinction, and thus prevailed in the world; for these two things are the causes of the late calamities. Lord, amend thou our hearts, our courts, and our families; then may we hope for better times.

Lord, thou hast search'd and seen me through,
Thine eye commands with piercing view
My rising and my resting hours,
My heart and flesh with all their powers.

O may these thoughts possess my breast,
Where'er I rove, where'er I rest:
Nor let my weaker passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.

SEPTEMBER II.

Upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. MATT. xvi. 18. Fear not, little flock; for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. LUKE. xii. 32.

THE real rock and corner stone is Christ himself. If we turn to him alone, build our hopes upon him, rely only upon his merits, and follow him as his sheep; then we belong to his flock, his church; all the gates of hell shall not prevail against us, and we shall stand against storms and floods of temptations. Men may endeavour to make us fall, but the Lord will support us. Though we are weak, our rock, in whom we trust, is strong and firm enough, and cannot be shaken. Though we are inwardly blind, ignorant, and like lost sheep, our Saviour and Shepherd is our light and wisdom, and will not suffer us to go astray to the ruin of our souls. And though we are a little flock, our great Shepherd is about us with his whole host of angels, and therefore we have nothing to fear from any of our enemies within or without; for it is our Father's pleasure, joy, and delight, to give us the kingdom, of which neither men nor devils shall deprive us.

Lo, what a glorious corner stone,
The Jewish builders did refuse;
But God hath built his church thereon,
In spite of envy and the Jews.

Great God, the work is all divine,
The joy and wonder of our eyes;
This is the day that proves it thine,
The day that saw our Saviour rise.

SEPTEMBER III.

Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Wo unto the world, because of offences, &c. If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee, &c. MATT. xviii. 3, 7, 8.

THE disciples entertained the vain thought of who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus placed a child among them and said, that except they were converted, and became humble and innocent, like that child, they should not enter into the kingdom of heaven. We see from these and the rest of his words, how difficult it is to enter into the kingdom of heaven. We must be born again, become quite new men, as humble and innocent as a child, be truly converted. We must offend no man, not even a child; for Christ denounces a woe against such offenders, and says (ver. 6.) that it would be better for them to have been drowned in the midst of the sea. Nor must we offend ourselves, that is, we must not be discouraged or dissuaded from following that which is good, but remove every hindrance to our virtue, even if it were as dear to us as our hands, or feet, or eyes. We should crucify our favourite desire, and cast off even our bosom sin. We see, how necessary it is, that we should be in earnest, and how many deceive themselves with false hopes of heaven; for how can this childlike humility and innocence of heart consist with vain-glory, the queen of the world? And who is as careful and earnest as he might be, in avoiding offences?

Vain are the hopes that rebels place
Upon their birth and blood;
Descended from a pious race
(Their fathers now with God.)

He from the caves of earth and hell,
Can take the hardest stones;
And fill the house of Abraham well,
With new created sons.

SEPTEMBER IV.

If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father who is in heaven. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. MATT. xviii. 19. xxi. 22.

THE first words shew us the great use of united prayer. God heareth prayer in general, if but one individual believer applies to him; how much more, if two or three, or more, agree to ask the same thing, whether they are personally met together or not, if they only ask for the same thing, they shall certainly receive it from their Father, who is in heaven: as a common parent will grant the thing, which not one, but all his children ask of him, how much more will our heavenly Father hear his children, when they unite in prayer to him. We should therefore excite and call upon each other to pray for such things as we need, particularly for faithful labourers, and that the Lord would be pleased to frustrate the unwearied endeavours of the enemies of righteousness. God will certainly hear this prayer, and help us. And we shall then see which of the two will prevail, the enemy or the devout petitioner to God. For we shall certainly receive all that we ask in faith, relying upon the word of promise; for, says Luther, if the word is on my side, I have all things, every thing will follow which the word has promised, for God cannot suffer his word to stop short.

Let Papists trust what names they please,
Their saints and angels boast:
We've no such advocates as these,
Nor pray to th' heav'nly host.

'Twas well, my soul, Christ died for thee,
And shed his vital blood;
Appeas'd stern justice on the tree,
And then arose to God.

SEPTEMBER V.

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Watch therefore,

&c. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh. And they that were ready, &c. MATT. xxiv. 39, 42, 44. xxv. 10.

As men were very secure before the flood, so also will they be before the last judgment, these will despise the warnings of God, as those disregarded the preaching of Noah. This security prevails already, and will prevail more and more, notwithstanding the awful judgments which have actually commenced; for the people of our days are like those of old, intent only upon a life of pleasure, upon eating, dringing, marrying, and giving in marriage, without taking thought for their souls and salvation. And this is a certain mark of the sudden approach of still greater judgments. Even the less among them content themselves, like the foolish virgins, with mere outward appearance and worship, without the unction of the Holy Ghost, without preparing and dressing themselves for the marriage of the Lamb. They defer their preparation, till death comes at an hour when they think not. Thus unprepared, they hope to make the last sigh avail, and to buy oil, but it is then in many cases too late, and the door is shut. O that we may therefore be enabled immediately to awake and turn to the Lord, and then continue to watch and keep ourselves ready!

The judge prepares his throne on high,
The frighted earth and seas
Avoid the fury of his eye,
And flee before his face.

O may I stand before the Lamb,
When earth and seas are fled,
And hear the Judge pronounce my name
With blessings on my head.

How shall I bear that dreadful day
And stand the fiery test?
I give all mortal joys away,
To be for ever blest.

SEPTEMBER VI.

Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, &c. And he shall set the sheep on his right

hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, &c. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. MATT. xxv. 32, 33, 34, 41.

We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; but how little is this considered! men flatter themselves that they shall be accepted indiscriminately as Christians; but it is expressly said, he shall separate them one from another, and set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. He calls those blessed, and these cursed; invites those to everlasting joy, and adjudges these to everlasting fire. To the goats not those only belong, who have grievously sinned, but such men also as have neglected to do good, to shew mercy, and have not been faithful and profitable to him; of these it is said, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness;" whereas the other is called a good and faithful servant, and invited to bliss; nay he receives the talent, which the slothful servant had hid or misapplied; for unto every one that hath, and through assisting grace faithfully applies it, more shall be given in the present time, as well as in eternity.

The saint who triumphs o'er his sins,
God owneth for his son;
The whole creation shall reward
The conquests he has won.

May I with saints for ever dwell
Who here were my delight,
While sinners banish'd down to hell
No more offend my sight.

SEPTEMBER VII.

Take heed what you hear; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. and unto you that have shall more be given. For he that hath, to him it shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. MARK iv. 24, 25.

THESE words are frequently repeated in the gospels, particularly in the parable of the three servants, Matt. xxv. and Luke xix. where they are prefaced with, "I

say unto you." This and the frequent repetition of the words should make an impression upon us, and excite us to deal faithfully with all that we have, especially with the word of God, and the several means of grace, with all our spiritual and temporal gifts, to apply them rightly, for our own edification and that of other men. For with what measure of fidelity we mete unto God, in the use of his word and all his gifts, in prayer and works of mercy, or whatever it be, he will measure unto us again, with additions, a full measure running over, and he will improve our gifts, our talent, and the opportunities of trafficing with it. An enlightened teacher, who is not faithful in the use of his knowledge and gifts, falls back immediately, and such apostates become the most dangerous men. God suffers them for their guilt to fall into useless, unprofitable things, takes from them their talent and the opportunity of doing good, and gives it to others who are more faithful, as I have often observed.

He who abhors and fears to sin,
Whose heart is pure, whose hands are clean;
Him shall the Lord the Saviour bless,
And clothe his soul with righteousness.

These are the men, the pious race,
That seek the God of Jacob's face;
These shall enjoy the blissful sight,
And dwell in everlasting light.

SEPTEMBER VIII.

All things are possible to him that believeth. Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, &c. he shall have whatsoever he saith Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. MARK ix. 23. xi. 22, 23, 24. MATT. xxvi. 41.

How powerful is faith! Jesus invites us to believe, and worketh faith in us, by the words, "Believe that ye receive them." If we believe, we shall have whatsoever we pray for, consequently nothing will be too great for us to ask, no enemy will be too strong for us. However

Satan, sin, and the world may tempt us, however great our difficulties and hindrances may be, however high and insurmountable the hills may seem before us, by the prayer of faith we shall remove and surmount them. We cannot expect to be exempted from trials and temptations; but if we watch and pray, we shall not fall into them so as to be injured; nothing shall exceed our ability or hurt us, for we shall obtain and enjoy the fruit of our victory at last, and derive such a blessing from it, that all seeming hindrances will only forward us.

Not by the terrors of a slave
Do saints perform God's will;
But with the noblest pow'rs they have,
His sweet commands fulfil.

They find access at ev'ry hour.
To God within the veil:
Hence they derive a quick'ning power,
And joys that never fail.

SEPTEMBER IX.

And (Jesus) began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death, &c. And he saith, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee, take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? MARK xiv. 33, 34, 36. xv. 34.

THE passion of Jesus is the most powerful motive to a sorrowful confession of sins and repentance. Jesus began on the mount of Olives to be amazed and heavy. His soul was sorrowful even unto death. He wrestles with death, eternal death; and his sweat in the anguish of his soul is like drops of blood falling on the ground, and on the cross he complains of being forsaken by God. And all this for our sins! How can I continue to love and practise sin, and not rather regard it as a great abomination, and hate and lament it, since it brought upon my Saviour such inexpressible suffering, and drew from him that bloody sweat. Now, whosoever misapplies the sufferings of Christ for his own carnal security, and self-indulgence, increaseth his own con-

demnation; but he who is led by it to repentance, may make it his highest comfort. Jesus hath borne and atoned for all his sins, he hath complained on the cross of being forsaken, that the repenting sinner might not be forsaken. He prayed for him on the mount of Olives, and on the cross, and however feeble and imperfect the prayer of the sinner may be, that of Jesus is full of faith, earnest and importunate, more and more fervent, yet more resigned; and this prayer of Jesus comprehends his, and is as such accepted by God.

Christ sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to his throne;
There's ne'er a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan.

SEPTEMBER X.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, as Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke ii. 10, 11.

If we stand in awe, like the shepherds, and wait for the consolation of Israel to comfort our hearts, we may imagine an angel accosting us with, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." Which words, says Luther, ought to be always present to our minds. Every kind of fear should vanish before the mild infant Jesus, and our believing hearts glow with rapture, for this joy shall be to all people, and consequently to us; for to us also a child is born, to us a son is given. We should embrace him in our hearts, as Simeon took him up in his arms. And then may we sing praises to God and say, "Glory be to God in the highest," &c. He, our Saviour, being our Lord, will with his power protect us. He will enable us, like Simeon, to depart in peace, and give us all things, for he hath already given us the highest gift in giving his Son.

Behold the grace appears,
The promise is fulfilled;
Mary, the wondrous virgin bears,
And Jesus is the child.

To bring the glorious news,
A heavenly form appears;
He tells the shepherds of their joys,
And banishes their fears.

SEPTEMBER XI.

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, &c. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven, &c. Wo unto you, when all men shall speak well of you, &c, LUKE vi. 22, 23, 26.

To do good and suffer ill, is the characteristic of the true followers of Christ. Christ restored a man's withered hand on the Sabbath, and convinced the Pharisees that he did not thereby break the Sabbath. Yet he was obliged to bear their malice; for we read that they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus. Thus when the Pharisees of our days are convinced of the truth, and we are at a loss for an answer, they are filled with madness, and only vilify and abuse us. Yet Jesus persisted in doing good, in spite of their malice, for he spent that same night in prayer, and on the morrow chose the twelve apostles; hereby shewing that they who are to elect or ordain teachers and ministers should begin with fervent prayer. Jesus still farther persevered in doing good; for when the sick multitude desired to touch him, a virtue went forth from him, and he healed them all. How much more will a virtue proceed from him, into our souls, and heal us all. If it be our lot to suffer for doing good, we should also persevere, and not be deterred by the malice of the world, we should be happy and rejoice, for our reward will be great in heaven. Whereas Jesus denounces a woe against those of whom all men speak well. This is no good sign. A minister therefore should not seek honour among men, but the glory of God alone.

Christ lives, he lives, and sits above,
For ever interceding there:
Who shall divide us from his love,
Or what shall tempt us to despair?

Not all that men on earth can do,
Nor pow'rs on high, nor pow'rs below,
Shall cause his mercy to remove,
Or wean our hearts from Christ our love.

SEPTEMBER XII.

The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. LUKE x. 2.

How necessary is this prayer now, when the harvest is great, but the labourers daily decrease. This is a consideration for all Christians, for all churches, and especially those who elect their own ministers. If congregations and patrons would pray for faithful teachers, they might have them. Before Jesus chose the twelve, he spent the preceding night in prayer. It was said of the great Seckondorff, that no civil matters, however important, gave him so much anxiety as the choice of a parish priest upon his own estate, and that he spent the whole preceding night in prayer. But few are there who imitate his care and devotion. How many choose only from favour or other improper motives, and pay no regard to true godliness; they perhaps hearken to the best bidder, or expect the candidates to beg and solicit promotion. The faithful ought therefore to pray the more earnestly for upright labourers. And they are encouraged to pray for them in faith, since Jesus, who did not prescribe many forms of prayer, yet furnishes us with the very words of this prayer; so that we may be assured it is acceptable to God, and he will hear us.

The God of Jacob chose the hill
Of Zion for his antient rest;
And Zion in his dwelling still,
His church is with his presence blest.

Here will I fix my gracious throne,
And reign for ever, saith the Lord:
Here shall my power and love be known,
And blessings shall attend my word.

SEPTEMBER XIII.

And when he came to himself, he said, I will arise and go to my father, &c. And he arose, &c. But when he was yet a great way off, &c. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, &c. But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, &c. LUKE xv. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

CHRIST shews throughout this chapter, in three parables, that the Pharisees spoke truth in saying, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Jesus, the faithful Shepherd, seeks all the lost sheep; the Holy Spirit restores in us the lost image of God, and the Father receives the lost but penitent son with a thousand demonstrations of joy. But how does this happen? The poor sinner falls into great concern and trouble, and then comes to himself, which is the very end for which Christ sends distress. He will arise and go to his father, and he doth arise. Some make good resolutions, and design to turn, but go no farther. The sinner must proceed to action before he can have assurance of his own conversion, that his father hath met him, prevented him with his grace and pity, and given him the kiss of peace. The sinner blushes and is humbled at this, confessing his sins, and that he is not worthy to be called his son. But the father refuses to hear any more of sin, orders immediately the best robe to be brought, and prepares a joyful feast for the repenting sinner.

Behold the wretch, whose lust and wine
Has wasted his estate,
He begs a share among the swine,
To taste the husks they eat.

I die with hunger here, he cries,
I starve in foreign lands;
My Father's house has large supplies,
And bounteous are his hands.

He said, and hasted to his home
To seek his Father's love;
The Father saw the rebel come,
And all his bowels move.

Take off his clothes of shame and sin,
(The Father gives commands)
Dress him in garments white and clean,
With rings adorn his hand.

SEPTEMBER XIV.

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. LUKE xviii. 1.

THE parable is that of an unjust judge, who delivered an oppressed widow from her adversary, merely to get rid of her importunity; upon which Christ says (ver. 7.) "And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you, he will avenge them speedily," &c. After this Christ shews (ver. 13, 14.) from the example and prayer of the penitent publican, how penitently and humbly men ought to pray: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Every one," says he, "that exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." Men are apt to think it sufficient, if at the last they do but utter this ejaculation of the publican; but his repentance and humility of heart were essential to his prayer. Are we enabled to present ourselves before God, as true and humble penitents, in poverty of spirit, oppressed by our spiritual or temporal enemies, then let us pray without ceasing to God day and night. God will speedily deliver us, for he is not an unjust, but a most righteous judge, and our most merciful father, reconciled to us in Christ.

Behold how sinners disagree,
The publican and Pharisee.
One doth his righteousness proclaim,
The other owns his guilt and shame.

This man at humble distance stands,
And cries for grace with lifted hands;
That boldly rises near the throne,
And talks of duties he has done.

The Lord their different language knows,
And different answers he bestows;
The humble soul with grace he crowns,
Whilst on the proud his anger frowns.

SEPTEMBER XV.

And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. *Thus prayed Jesus on the mount of Olives; and on the cross he prayed for his executioners,* **Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.** *To the malefactor he said,* **Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;** *and his last prayer was,* **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. LUKE xxii. 44. xxiii. 34, 43, 46.**

How earnest should Christians be, since Jesus shewed himself so earnest for our salvation, on the mount of Olives, as to struggle with death, and pray so fervently, that his sweat was as it were drops of blood. Lord, take away from us all lukewarmness, carelessness, impenitence and slothfulness, that we may pray more and more fervently. Let thy sufferings and prayer on the mount of Olives turn to our benefit, and make our imperfect prayer acceptable to the Father. Thou didst pray for us malefactors, who crucified thee by our sins, and didst commend our spirit along with thine into the hands of thy Father; grant that we may derive comfort from this, especially in the hour of death. Do thou thyself receive our spirits into thy hands, and give us assurance, that we shall be with thee in Paradise.

God of my mercy and my praise,
Thy glory is my song;
Though sinners speak against thy grace,
With a blaspheming tongue.

Lord, shall thy bright example shine
In vain before my eyes?
Give me a soul akin to thine,
To love my enemies.

SEPTEMBER XVI.

The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. LUKE xxiv. 34, 36.

THE Lord is risen indeed! This has been, and still is the great word of comfort; for it signifies, Jesus died and was buried for our sins, he hath discharged them all,

as our surety, and left them in the grave; else God would not have delivered him from the power of death. But he rose indeed for our justification, when by his resurrection he was acquitted from the sins of the world, and so he actually restored to us eternal righteousness and eternal peace. Hence he so frequently repeats to his disciples, "Peace be with you." He desired by his resurrection to restore peace of mind to all that mourned; therefore he first appeared to the afflicted Mary Magdalene, next to the fallen Peter, and ordered the first notice of his resurrection to be given to all who were afflicted, and to him by name. He appeared to the two disciples, who walked to Emmaus and were sad, and opened to them the scriptures: and to Thomas he shewed his side and the print of the nails. All which shews that Jesus being risen, will gladly bring comfort and peace to us who mourn, by the power of his resurrection; and therefore says to us all, "Peace be with you."

Down to the shades of death
Christ bow'd his awful head;
But he arose to live and reign,
When death itself was dead.

There the Redeemer sits,
High on his Father's throne;
The Father lays his vengeance by,
And smiles upon his Son.

SEPTEMBER XVII.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. JOHN iii. 14, 15, 36.

WE are all lost sinners by nature; but lest we should continue in that state, God in his infinite love hath found a propitiation, when he lifted up Christ on the cross, as Moses, by way of type, had lifted up a serpent. Then Jesus, our surety, took upon himself our guilt, and

fully atoned and paid for it on the cross, that all who believe in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. He who doth not receive the Son, the only propitiatory sacrifice, the wrath of God abideth on him. Alas! the poor libertines! do they not see the wrath of God in the present terrible judgments? The type of the brazen serpent shews the order in which we are to receive the Son of God. The Israelites felt the pain of the bite of the fiery serpent; but when they looked on the brazen serpent, they were healed. So we, as those who feel the bite of sin, that old serpent, and lament it with a penitent heart, should look up to Jesus in faith; thereby shall we be healed and saved.

Not to condemn the sons of men,
Did Christ the Son of God appear;
No weapons in his hands are seen,
No flaming sword nor thunder there.

Such was the pity of our God,
He lov'd the race of man so well,
He sent his Son to bear the load
Of sins, and save our souls from hell.

SEPTEMBER XVIII.

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. JOHN iv. 10, 14.

WE may suppose Jesus to say the same thing to us at this time; and if we pray to him, he will give us that water, the Holy Ghost. Although after much prayer we should not perceive ourselves to have obtained a drop of it, yet we must still persevere in prayer, and the least drop will become in us a spring, which will run through troubles and death into eternal life. As the waters mentioned in Ezek. xlvii. ran deeper and deeper, so the gifts of the Holy Ghost will increase in us, and we shall receive more and more light, willingness, and

power, to know and do the will of God, that as it was the meat of Christ (ver. 34.) to do the will of his father, so it will be our meat. Lord, grant and improve in me all the gifts of thy Holy Spirit, the water of life, that the same may flow in me from death to eternal life.

To see my Saviour and my Lord,
I my own self resign;
By thee to hope and life restor'd,
I will be ever thine.

SEPTEMBER XIX.

Wilt thou be made whole? (*Jesus said unto him,*) Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. JOHN v. 6, 14.

JESUS now stands before us, and asks us, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The answer is, Yes, my Saviour, I desire to be made whole, especially in my soul; I have been long infirm, and no one can help me but thou alone. And will not Jesus heal us? Most certainly he will. But few men seek the health of their souls; for they feel not their disease. For this cause God often sends a long sickness, or some other trouble, that during the affliction they may be led to a penitent sense of their sins, then he will remove or mitigate their bodily sickness or other distress. So that he still puts this question to a sick or afflicted man, "Wilt thou be made whole?" or wilt thou have other relief? but wilt thou have it upon condition of acting as becomes a Christian who is born again, and is desirous of being prepared for the enjoyment of the saints in light. And to him, who has been relieved by Jesus, the words may be well applied, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee;" for it is no uncommon thing for men to grow worse after their recovery.

I love the Lord; he heard my cries,
And pitied every groan;
Long as I live, when troubles rise,
I'll hasten to his throne.

SEPTEMBER XX.

How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not that honour that cometh from God only; This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. No man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. JOHN v. 44. vi. 29, 44.

FAITH is the great point; but every thing is not faith which passes for such. There are two principal obstacles to it. Whosoever is the slave of ambition, is not possessed of faith; for it is here expressly said, "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another," &c. Which words formerly convinced me, that my faith was not of the right sort. So we read, chap. xii. 42, 43. that many among the chief rulers believed on him, but not perfectly, so as to confess Christ; for it is said, that "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Who is there that considers this danger of ambition? The next obstacle to faith is, *that men*, before they are convinced of their sins, create as it were a faith of their own, the mere work of their imagination, by which they deceive themselves. Faith is the work of God. His Holy Spirit produces it in the humble contrite heart, and himself draws us to his Son. It is no small comfort to the penitent, that they have not to form a faith of their own. God himself having revealed every thing necessary in his word; by the Spirit operating with the scripture we are made wise to salvation.

Sinners, believe the Saviour's word,
Trust in his mighty name and live;
A thousand joys his lips afford,
His hands a thousand blessings give.

Tremble, my soul, and kiss the Son!
Sinners, obey the Saviour's call:
Else your damnation hastens on,
And hell gapes wide to wait your fall.

SEPTEMBER XXI.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life; and the bread that I will

give is my flesh. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, &c. and he dwelleth in me, and I in him. Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. JOHN vi. 47, 48, 51, 54, 56, 68.

JESUS here again testifies, as he had done chap. v. 24. by a double affirmation, that he that believeth on him, hath everlasting life, that he hath it already, and is already saved; we should therefore believe what Jesus so frequently repeats, and so solemnly affirms. He calls himself the bread of life, and gives his flesh for meat; so that eating his flesh and drinking his blood amounts to the same as believing on him. Faith therefore is no dead principle, or mere speculation; but is alive, and has its object, Christ the bread of life. Hence the faithful, like St. Peter, experience his words to be the words of eternal life, and do not, like other men, draw back from him, in order to be something, and effect something of themselves. For when Jesus declared, that it was necessary for them to hear and receive their knowledge from the Father, and the gift of faith from him, they were offended, and went back. Lord Jesus, preserve us from this by thy grace. Amen.

Jesus is gone above the skies,
Where our weak senses reach him not;
And carnal objects court our eyes,
To thrust our Saviour from our thought.

The Lord of life this table spread
With his own flesh and dying blood,
We on the rich provision feed,
And taste the wine, and bless our God.

SEPTEMBER XXII.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, &c. Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed. JOHN vii. 17, 47, 48, 40.

SUCH is the case at present. Many of the common people or unlearned are, like these offices of the Pharisees, convinced by the gospel, whilst many of the learned do not discern the truth. What is the reason? They

will not do the will of God. Hence they cannot be convinced of the truth, though it were ever so plainly demonstrated to them. Their perverse will blinds them, and prevents their humbling themselves. The other reason is, they conclude from their knowledge and specious appearance, that they know and love God, and ask, like the Pharisees, "Are we blind also?" but see the answer of Christ in John ix. 41. If any one acknowledge himself blind, the Lord will enable him to see. Some have eyes enough for other things, but none for this; they imagine to have a far greater degree of light than all their experienced teachers; the consequence is, their sin remaineth, and they are proud fools. If therefore we desire to know the truth, and rightly to instruct others in it, we must do the will of God, be enabled to consider ourselves as blind, and patiently hear doctrine and reproof, like Nicodemus, who was so convinced of the truth, that (ver. 51.) he even contradicted the Pharisees. We must thirst after grace and truth, and so shall be fulfilled in us the promise of ver. 37, 38.

Father, I thank thy wond'rous love,
That hath reveal'd thy Son
To men unlearned, and to babes
Has made thy gospel known.

The mysteries of redeeming grace,
Are hidden from the wise;
While pride and carnal reas'nings join,
To swell and blind their eyes.

SEPTEMBER XXIII.

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? She *(Martha)* saith unto him, yea, Lord, I believe, &c. *Yet she afterwards said,* Lord, by this time he stinketh. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? JOHN xi. 25, 26, 39, 40.

JESUS is also our resurrection and life, and will be our life even in death, our eternal life, for with him we

have passed from death unto life, and shall in the midst of death be encompassed with eternal life. But he also asketh us, "Believest thou this?" Yes, Lord Jesus, I believe, but help thou mine unbelief. Martha also believed, but her faith failed her at last, and she said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh." We must therefore persevere in faith, and though we should see nothing before us but our corruption and misery, and see no way of extricating ourselves out of the distress we are in, yet if we firmly believe, the Lord will not fail to help us and ours; we shall see his glory; for he relieves the distressed, and the greater their distress and misery is, the more will the glory of God, his Amighty power, wisdom, and goodness, be manifested and praised.

And must this body die?
This mortal frame decay?
And must these active limbs of mine
Lie mould'ring in the clay?

Corruption, earth, and worms,
Shall but refine this flesh:
Till my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh.

SEPTEMBER XXIV.

If any man serve me, let him follow me, &c. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, &c. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away. JOHN xii. 26. LUKE ix. 23, 24, 25. See MATT. xvi. 24—26.

THE following of Christ, and self-denial, are so often inculcated in the four gospels, that they are become indispensably necessary. He therefore who would be a faithful servant of Christ, must follow him in a holy life, in patient suffering in denial of himself and of the world, and take his cross upon him daily. The taking it up daily, renders it easy; if it be omitted a single day, it will grow more difficult. Christ, says Arndt, has many servants, but few followers. They desire to be excused from the cross of Christ, or at least

refuse daily to crucify their lusts and desires, but still indulge themselves in some worldly pursuit, while in the mean time they lose their souls. But in order to make the following of Christ a genuine and lasting work, it should proceed from faith. We must first receive Christ in faith, as our sacrifice of atonement; then shall we receive him as our example, and willingly follow and serve him; since, as he tells us, where he is, there shall also his servants be; and his Father will honour us.

I'm not asham'd to own my Lord,
Or to defend his cause;
Maintain the honour of his word,
The glory of his cross.

For ever his dear sacred name
Shall dwell upon my tongue;
And Jesus and salvation be
The close of ev'ry song.

SEPTEMBER XXV.

Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe them not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. JOHN xii. 35, 46, 47, 48.

IF we have the light of revelation, and walk not after it, we act very unfaithfully. Darkness will soon come upon us, and the word shall judge and condemn us on the last day. So that we must not sport with the word of God. We must be in earnest and follow it, else it will be taken from us as it was from the Jews. Every word, which we know and do not follow, will be a swift witness against us. O how necessary is it to be obedient and faithful to the word. For from infidelity proceeds nothing but darkness. But great comfort is here proposed to the faithful. He who believes in Christ, whatever infirmity and darkness he may feel, shall not only be delivered from that darkness, but shall be thoroughly enlightened, shall know God; as love, and Jesus tells him, that he is not,

come to judge, but to save the world, and this he says even to his enemies.

The gospel shines, and God appears
Great on his throne of grace;
With pitying eyes, attentive ears,
And with a smiling face.

It points the way where we must tread,
To shun eternal pains;
And dwell where Christ, our living head,
In boundless glory reigns.

Christ, 'tis a name of sweetest sound,
Diffusing life and peace;
We'll gladly spread his fame around,
And loudly sing his praise.

SEPTEMBER XXVI.

He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean. Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you. JOHN xiii, 10, 15. xv. 3.

PETER refused to have his feet washed by Jesus. But "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" upon which he offered his hands, feet, and head to be washed: "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not," &c. If we believe in Jesus, and are washed by his blood for the justification and remission of sins, we are clean every whit; for the blood of the Son of God cleanseth us from all sins. So that we neither need, nor can be cleaner. We should daily wash our feet, that is, purify our walk and conversation, and follow Christ more sincerely; for it is for this purpose, that he hath given us an example, especially of love and humility, that we should do to our neighbour as he did to us. Now if we believe the words of Christ, we are clean every whit, white and pure without blemish. And the more we consider ourselves, after justification, as justified, pure, and unblemished, and the more peace we enjoy, the more able and willing shall we be, after our sanctification, to keep ourselves clean.

Now to the Lord that makes us know
The wonders of his dying love,
Be humble honours paid below,
And strains of nobler praise above.

'Twas he that cleans'd our foulest sins,
And wash'd us in his richest blood;
'Tis he that makes us priests and kings,
And brings us rebels near to God.

SEPTEMBER XXVII.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. JOHN xiv. 13, 14. xvi. 24.

So often does Christ repeat the assurance, that he will do whatsoever we shall ask in his name. We should therefore pray only in the name of Christ, trusting to his merits and intercession, and not appear before God without him, our Mediator, which the disciples had not yet done, for they did not yet understand his mediatorial office. If we pray in the name of Christ, he will do it himself, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. As the Father's glory is dear to him, he will certainly do what we ask. And then the Father will give us all we ask; for Jesus here affirms it solemnly and repeatedly, and says, chap. xvi. 27. that the Father himself loveth us; and therefore he will give us all things, at his intercession. This may and ought to excite us to faithful prayer.

Lift up your eyes to th' heavenly seats
Where your Redeemer stays;
Kind Intercessor, there he sits,
And loves, and pleads, and prays.

Petitions now and praise may rise,
And saints their offerings bring;
The Priest with his own sacrifice
Presents them to the king.

SEPTEMBER XXVIII.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good

cheer, I have overcome the world. I pray not, that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. And I have declared unto them thy name, &c. JOHN xvi. 33. xvii. 15, 16, 26.

THE world is filled with disturbance and tribulation, but in Jesus we shall have peace. Hence he speaks none but words of peace to us, that in him we might have and keep peace. And whenever the world troubles us, he says, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" and therefore the prince of this world. So that the world and Satan will not be able to take our peace from us, for they are vanquished enemies. And that we may have the greater comfort, he prays for us, that God would preserve us from evil in the world, that we may not be of the world, not have a worldly mind, nor let the glory and love of the world captivate us. For in the knowledge of him we have that which is much more valuable, eternal life, and the love of the Father towards his Son, and the Son himself, will be in us. O how great a love! O how transcendent a glory!

Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.

The sorrows of the mind
Be banish'd from the place,
Religion never was design'd
To make our pleasures less.

SEPTEMBER XXIX.

Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. JOHN xix. 18. *On the cross he said to his mother* ver. 26, 27. Woman, behold thy son; *and to John*, Behold thy mother. *And* ver. 28. I thirst. *And* ver. 30. It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

MY Saviour, it is written of thee, "He was reckoned among the transgressors," which was particularly fulfilled on the cross. But we are all transgressors, and thou art in the midst of us sinners, to impart to us the blessing of

thy cross, and save us, however great our evil deeds are. Thou didst provide on the cross for our bodily welfare, support, and refreshment, as thou didst for that of thy mother. So that every bodily enjoyment is a blessing derived from thy cross. O let us in the midst of our temporal enjoyments think upon thy cross, and use all those things with holy fear and thankfulness. Thou wast on the cross like a dry potsherd, faint and thirsty, then they gave thee vinegar and gall to drink. But thou didst there expiate our sinful thirst, that we might not perish for ever. Thou didst thirst after our salvation, O let us thirst for thee, and be refreshed by thee at the hour of death. And as thou hast fulfilled all that was necessary for our reconciliation, grant that we may rest, in life and death, only in thy full and perfect sacrifice for us, and after having discharged all our duty in life, may we be able to say in death, "It is finished."

I sing my Saviour's wond'rous death,
He conquer'd when he fell;
'Tis finish'd, said his dying breath,
And shook the gates of hell.

'Tis finish'd our Emanuel cries,
The dreadful work is done:
Hence shall his sov'reign throne arise,
His kingdom is begun.

SEPTEMBER XXX.

Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not *(do not stay with me,)* for I am not yet ascended to my father *(thou wilt see me again,)* but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. JOHN xx. 15, 16, 17.

THIS Mary was perhaps the most afflicted, and the person who loved our Saviour best, and longed most for him; whence he made his first appearance to her. He still regards the penitent soul, who seeks him with tears, calls her by name, as he did Mary, and will certainly

appear to her with comfort and help. Jesus being willing to comfort the other afflicted disciples, would not suffer Mary to tarry long with him, but ordered her to hasten away, and acquaint them with his resurrection; and that they were henceforth to consider his Father to whom he ascended, as their Father, and his God as their God, and so themselves as his brethren. The same word of comfort he delivers to us, who believe on him.

To Jesus let our praises rise,
Who gave himself a sacrifice;
Now he appears before his God,
And for our pardon pleads his blood.

OCTOBER I.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. JOHN XX. 27, 28, 29.

THOMAS would not believe without seeing the print of the nails; yet Jesus had compassion on his weakness, and showed him the print of the nails, and the wound in his side. This convinced him, and he cried out, My Lord and my God! Thus God often takes an extraordinary step to bring those who are very infirm to believe in him; for he will suffer none to continue in unbelief, who do not wantonly resist him; but it is most usual to believe the word, without first seeing and feeling. Hence Jesus saith, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Faith is conversant with things invisible, and the believer adheres to the word, and appeals to it before God. Though he has not yet seen or felt what is there promised, but the contrary.

Not with our mortal eyes
Have we beheld the Lord;
Yet we rejoice to hear his name,
And love him in his word.

OCTOBER II.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? and he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. JOHN xxi. 17. *see also* ver. 18, 19. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, &c.

JESUS here examines Peter closely, and asks him thrice whether he loved him; and as Peter answered in the affirmative, the reply was, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, &c. How few candidates are qualified for such an examination! Whoever doth not love Christ the chief Shepherd, is not fit to be a shepherd of souls, for, like an hireling, he will seek only his own honour and advantage, not how to feed the sheep. Yet a blind Pharisee thinks himself fit for this examination; he imagines he loves God and Jesus, and yet he loves neither his faithful shepherds, nor the sheep, nor is a sheep himself, and how can he be a true shepherd? he is an offensive goat. It is the property of true pastors to love, to feed, and to suffer; ever to deny their own will, and entirely to submit themselves to the discipline of their divine Master. Whilst they were young, they were more at liberty; but in their advanced years they must conform themselves to suffering, and, like Peter, be carried whither they would not. But their comfort is, that through their sufferings, and through their death, God will be glorified, and every thing will turn out to their salvation.

Thou whom my soul admires above
All earthly joy and earthly love,
Tell me, dear Shepherd, let me know
Where doth thy sweetest pastures grow?

The footsteps of thy flock I see;
Thy sweetest pastures here they be;
A wond'rous feast thy love prepares,
Bought with thy wounds, and groans, and tears.

OCTOBER III.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and

Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent. Acts ii. 36, 37, 38.

PETER reproaches the Jews with having crucified Jesus, though by the hands of heathens, and they were pricked to the heart, and being deeply affected, they asked, What shall we do? and Peter said, Repent, change your mind. Now in order to our entering upon true repentance, we must consider ourselves as having crucified Jesus by our sins; this must penetrate and affect our hearts. But we must not let it rest with a pious notion and resolution, but actually proceed to repentance and a true change of heart; for these Jews were affected, yet Peter said unto them, "Repent;" a good motion and good resolution not being a complete repentance and change of heart. Many are moved, without proceeding to true repentance.

How sad our state by nature is;
Our sin, how deep it stains,
And Satan binds our captive minds
Fast in his slavish chains.

To the dear fountain of thy blood,
Incarnate God, I fly:
Here let me wash my spotted soul,
From crimes of deepest dye.

OCTOBER IV.

Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts iii. 19. iv. 12.

HOW frequently do Peter, the other apostles, and Jesus himself exhort to repentance! It is therefore indispensably necessary. It consists in coming to Jesus with a penitent and broken heart, and applying in faith for salvation, remission of sins, life and happiness, only in his name and through his blood. For without this name, there is no help, no salvation, and all the prophets gave witness to

this Jesus, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, (chap. x. 43.) and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (chap. ii. 21.) We shall infallibly be saved and refreshed, if we repent. This should recommend repentance to us, and allure and invite us to it; for who would not desire to be saved, refreshed, and blessed. Now true repentance is called a blessing (chap. iii. 26.) It is therefore necessary, since without it we are under a curse. And it is possible, for according to chap. v. 31. Jesus was exalted for this purpose, to give us repentance. As surely as he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour in heaven, he will give us true repentance.

See here an endless ocean flows
Of never-failing grace,
Behold a dying Saviour's veins,
That sacred flood increase.

Awake our hearts, adore the grace,
That buries all our faults,
And pard'ning blood, that swells above
Our follies, and our thoughts.

OCTOBER V.

For behold, he prayeth. Acts ix. 11. *Thus Paul prayed, when he was converted. And of Cornelius the centurian we read,* chap. x. 2, 4. *that he was* a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. *And an angel of God was sent to tell him,* Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Ananias was afraid to go to Saul, but Jesus said, "Behold, he prayeth;" he is now reformed, a very different man, thou hast nothing to fear. When men are truly converted, they pray, and that earnestly, not content with a cold morning and evening prayer, but throughout the day frequently pour out their hearts before God. The wants of their souls teach them to pray. So that the true prayer of the heart begins with true conversion, and such prayer gives solidity to the conversion, and ends in newness of life. This was the case of Cornelius. It is said,

that he prayed to God alway; he did not formally read a morning and evening prayer out of a book. Now if we pray thus earnestly and importunately, and firmly depend on Christ, our prayer shall come up for a memorial before God; for all our sighs are recorded in his book, and he will suffer none of them to be forgot or unheard.

How long, O Lord, shall I complain,
Like one that seeks his God in vain?
Canst thou thy face for ever hide?
And I still pray and be denied?

How will the powers of darkness boast,
If but one praying soul be lost?
But I have trusted in thy grace,
And shall again behold thy face.

OCTOBER VI.

Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. *They persevered in prayer, says Luther, they did not cease.* ACTS xiii. 5. *Then came an angel and led him out. And the gate* (ver. 10.) opened to them of its own accord, and they went out. *And when the angel left him* (ver. 12.) *Peter came to a house*, where many were gathered together, praying.

THUS God delivered Peter out of the hands of Herod, at the incessant prayer of the church, when he had been thrown into prison. But Herod was smitten, when the people shouted, and he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms. But the word of God grew and multiplied. Then might be applied what is said, Matth. ii. 20. "They are dead, which sought the young child's life. How great is the power of prayer; especially of incessant prayer offered up by many gathered together. The angel of the Lord will also succour us, though invisible, and every door that is shut shall be opened at our prayer, that is, all obstacles shall be removed, they shall rather forward our course, and all proud enemies shall be put to confusion. O that proud men would take warning from Herod! O that family and public prayer were more attended! as we read of St. Paul, chap. xx. 36. and again xxi. 5. that he kneeled down, and prayed with

them all, and once on the shore, in public. But to many this sort of prayer is a strange thing.

Be thou my sun, and thou my shield,
My soul in safety keep;
Make haste, before mine eyes are seal'd
In death's eternal sleep.

OCTOBER VII.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts xvii. 30, 31.

HERE repentance is again enjoined, for three reasons; First, because since the coming of Christ, and the preaching of his gospel, men have not the excuse of ignorance; consequently their guilt is the greater, if they continue impenitent. The coming and the merits of Christ do not give them licence to sin, but oblige them more strongly to repentance. Secondly, God will judge the world by Christ, therefore he commandeth all men every where to repent; for all men shall appear before his judgment seat; all who would there be acquitted, must repent, leave off sin, and come to Christ, that he may not judge them. O sinner, how wilt thou fare without repentance, before this just and impartial tribunal? No excuse, no rank will here avail, but every one shall receive according to his doings. Thirdly, God hath raised Christ from the dead, and will give and excite faith by his Spirit, and thus himself bring men to repentance and true conversion; as we read chap. v. 31. that Christ was therefore exalted, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Thus the passion and resurrection of Christ were not designed to make us secure, but penitent, and to make our repentance possible. Lord, save us!

'Twas sin that pull'd the vengeance down,
On Jesus' guiltless head;
Break, break, my heart, O burst, mine eyes,
And let my sorrows bleed.

Strike, mighty grace, my flinty soul,
Till melting waters flow;
And deep repentance drown mine eyes
In undissembled woe.

OCTOBER VIII.

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts xx. 21, 26, 28.

As Paul so strongly insisted on faith and repentance, a faithful teacher will do the same, and not regard those who say, he can preach nothing else. He will rather wish he could do it effectually. He will also endeavour so to conduct himself in his office, as to be pure from the blood of all men. He first takes heed to himself, and then to the church as bishop or overseer, and considers the church as purchased with the blood of Christ. He will not therefore suffer a single soul to perish through his fault; for in that case Christ would not only require the blood of the neglected soul, but his own blood too at his hands. Let us pray for faithful shepherds.

Thy threat'nings wake my slumb'ring eyes,
And warn me where my danger lies;
But 'tis thy blessed gospel, Lord,
That makes my guilty conscience clean,
Converts my soul, subdues my sin,
And gives a free, but large reward.

OCTOBER IX.

I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Acts xx. 29, 30, 31, 33.

HERE is room for every teacher, every father of a family, and every Christian, to try and humble himself,

when he reflects on the zeal, diligence, tears, and disinterestedness of St. Paul. But hirelings came soon after the apostle's departing, who sought their own, nay grievous wolves, even in this favoured city of Ephesus; teachers who taught perverse doctrine, in order to draw to themselves disciples, or much popularity. This always was and still is the case. Even the best seminaries may produce grievous wolves, who only study to gain applause, ridicule other teachers, and resist the truth, whilst they pretend, that they are contesting for it. And if such men are much followed, it is a dreadful spiritual judgment. However the faithful teachers should not be discouraged, but be the more faithful on their part, in labour and prayer; for when their enemies come to extremities, they shall, according to 1 Tim. i. 9. "proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men."

Let Zion's watchmen all awake
And take the alarm they give;
Now let them from the mouth of God,
Their awful charge receive.

OCTOBER X.

Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day. Acts xxiv. 18. xxvi. 22.

Men who are not yet acquainted with their evil heart imagine that they have a good conscience; but no one has this by nature. Their conscience is only asleep and insensible, which is dangerous, for, as Luther says, God makes first an evil conscience, and then a good one; that is, we must first feel our sins, our inward corruption, and evil conscience, and lay hold of the blood of Christ with a sorrowful penitent heart, and then we shall be rid of our evil conscience. After this we must keep our conscience void of offence toward God and toward men, so that we may walk innocently before God in the blood of Christ, and with a good and cheerful conscience before men, and be able to face them with confidence. In this condition we may have it in our

power, notwithstanding any ill treatment we meet with, to say, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day." And thus all events will work together for our salvation, and God will be glorified in us, whether it be by life or by death.

O blessed souls are they
Whose sins are cover'd o'er,
Divinely blest, to whom the Lord,
Imputes their guilt no more.

OCTOBER XI.

Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me. Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

The whole ministerial office tends to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; the minister should therefore himself be first enlightened, converted, and free from the power of Satan, else he cannot rightly enforce a true conversion, nor earnestly endeavour to free them from the snares of Satan, whilst he himself continues ensnared, perhaps by avarice or ambition. Being unenlightened himself, he will mistake many for converted, who are not so, give them improper advice, and prove a false comforter. But let every one look to himself; if he desires remission of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified, he must be converted and sanctified by faith. So that true faith effects holiness. Without it, there is neither remission nor inheritance. For the inheritance is called (Col. i. 12.) the inheritance of the saints in light. We must walk in the light, and follow after holiness. The Lord himself will assist us in this, that we may turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Go preach my gospel, saith the Lord,
Let the whole earth my grace receive;
He shall be sav'd that trusts my word,
He shall be damn'd who wont believe.

OCTOBER XII.

The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. *But the companion of faith is repentance, whence we read, that* The goodness of God leadeth to repentance. For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly. Rom. i. 16. ii. 4. 28, &c.

A PREACHER may hinder the faith of his hearers, and thus hinder the power of the gospel, by a cold manner of recommending it, and by an offensive life. But every man obstructs the faith in himself by impenitence; for faith is wrought only in repentance or a change of mind; so that we must not grow secure under the long-suffering goodness of God, but suffer it to lead us to repentance. But this must be hearty repentance. For as he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly by circumcision, so he is no Christian, who is one only outwardly; but he who is one inwardly, and by virtue of his faith hath circumcised and changed his heart. The Jews could not do this because of their specious outward shew, nor the Greeks because of their pretended wisdom, of which we read, chap. i. 22. that "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," which happens to this very day. Grant therefore, Lord, that we may humble ourselves, acknowledge our folly and evil heart; and so circumcise and change it, that we may experience thy gospel to be the power of God unto salvation.

The volume of my Father's grace,
Does all my grief assuage;
Here I behold my Saviour's face
In almost every page.

This is the field where, hidden, lies
The pearl of price unknown;
That merchant is divinely wise
Who makes this pearl his own.

OCTOBER XIII.

There is none that doeth good, no not one. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin. *In the 32d Psalm are moreover these words,* In whose spirit there is no guile. ROM. iii. 12, 27, 28. iv. 7, 8.

BY nature there is none that can do good, real good works. Therefore St. Paul rightly draws the conclusion, that we are justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the law, as we believe in him, who justifies the ungodly. For such we all are in the sight of God; it is he that makes us truly penitent, righteous, and good. Whosoever therefore would be saved, must consider himself as wicked by nature, impute the guilt of every sin to himself before God, stop his mouth, pray for grace, and for a spirit in whom is no guile who reserves no sins to himself, and he must plead the merits of Jesus before God, and not his own merits: then shall this faith be imputed to him as righteousness, all his sins shall be forgiven, covered, and none of them imputed to him; nay, in Christ he will be accounted as righteous as his Saviour himself. O glorious comforts! O blessed salvation!

Vain are the hopes the sons of men
On their own works have built;
Their hearts by nature all unclean,
And all their actions guilt.

Let Jew and Gentile stop their mouths,
Without a murmuring word;
And the whole race of creatures stand,
Condemn'd before the Lord.

OCTOBER XIV.

I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things, which be not, as though they were: who against hope believed in hope; and being not weak in faith, he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. ROM. iv. 17—22.

HOW great is the efficacy of faith! God imputes to it all righteousness, and confers upon it all salvation. And this, we read immediately after, was written for us also,

to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe, &c. O my God, grant unto us this faith of Abraham, that we also may believe, that thou quickenest the dead, and callest those things which be not, as though they were. Grant therefore that we not so dwell on our spiritual deadness as to despair; and if thy help be delayed, let us not grow weak in faith, but strong, and tarry, as Abraham was under a necessity of tarrying. And suffer us not to stagger at thy promise through unbelief, but grant us to be fully persuaded that thou wilt fulfil that which thou hast promised.

Faith is the brightest evidence
Of things beyond our sight:
Breaks through the clouds of flesh and sense,
And dwells in heav'nly light.

OCTOBER XV.

We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.

We should therefore not dread tribulation as an evil, but glory in it as salutary; for tribulation worketh patience. We are then doing the will of God, and a patient man is better than a strong man. A man, who has not experienced tribulation, is not yet broken, and is therefore impatient; but tribulation bends him and gives him patience. This patience worketh experience; for if we are patient, we shall be succoured; God will fight for us, and we shall experience his miraculous aid and assistance, if we do not through impatience look for aid from ourselves or others. This experience worketh hope. As the Lord hath heard, delivered, and succoured us so often, we hope he will deliver us hereafter. And this hope, like a strong anchor, will not suffer us to fall or to be ashamed. This faith shall not sink or grow weak, but it shall grow strong; and amidst this tribulation, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost. We receive him in a figure at baptism, and again in reality at the penitent renewal of our baptismal covenant, and he is our best Comforter in affliction, when he sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, which shall refresh us in trouble and in death.

Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell,
By faith and love in every breast;
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel
The joys that cannot be expressed.

OCTOBER XVI.

Know ye not, that so many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up, &c. Rom. vi. 3, 4.

St. Paul says, chap. v. 20. "Where sin abounded," that is, where the power of it was penitently discerned through the law, "grace did much more abound." Now as some might have misunderstood this, and have asked, Are we then to continue in sin, that grace may the more abound? he answers (ver. 2.) How shall we that are dead to sin (in baptism) live any longer therein?" Hence he says, "Know ye not," &c. So that being baptized into the death of Christ, and dead unto sin, the death of Christ is imputed to us, and every Christian is considered as having already suffered death for his sins. Nay, we are by baptism buried into the death of Christ. Now, as one who is dead and buried cannot again be put to death, so the sins of a Christian will not subject him to eternal death, he being dead unto sin in Christ. But we are, moreover, so baptized into the death of Christ on the cross, that according to ver. 6. the body of sin, the old man, is crucified and destroyed, that as Christ was raised up, so we also might walk in newness of life. And thus we are so very dead unto sin, that no sin can condemn or have dominion over us.

No more let sin and Satan reign,
Over our mortal flesh again;
The various lusts we seiz'd before,
Shall have dominion now no more.

OCTOBER XVII.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Therefore we are debtors, not to the flesh, &c. Rom. vii. 4. viii. 12.

A CARNAL mind is general among the unconverted in all regions. They agree in one point, in believing that they shall be saved, notwithstanding their continuing to *live* after the flesh. But they who are truly converted to Christ, are no longer carnally minded, are no longer debtors to live after the flesh, and by their carnal lusts to bring forth fruit unto death; for whoso liveth after the flesh, incurs eternal death. No, the faithful are no longer under the law, which is always exciting sinful lusts, without destroying them. They are dead unto the law, through the body of Christ; that as Christ died unto the law, so they might likewise, and be no longer subject to the condemnation of it. For the most severe law cannot condemn any one to death who is dead already. But being free from the law, they are married to Christ, enjoy his favour, and obtain power, through his resurrection, to yield fruit unto God, to mortify the sinful lusts of the flesh, so that no sin may have dominion over them.

Backward with humble shame we look
On our original;
How is our nature dash'd and broke
In our first father's fall.

Wild and unwholesome as the root,
Will all the branches be;
How can we hope for living fruit
From such a deadly tree?

OCTOBER XVIII.

Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, &c. Rom. viii. 15, 16, 26.

UNDER the old covenant the spirit of fear prevailed,

even among the faithful; but under the new, the faithful have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, like those under the old covenant. No, they have received a filial spirit, by which they cry, Abba, Father; and that even when they are suffering, as the Son of God did on the mount of Olives; for it is the Spirit of his Son. To you then, being children, hath God sent the Spirit of his Son, who crieth, Abba, Father. The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and that, partly by a particular joy and comfort in distress, partly by proposing to us the true marks of our adoption. This Spirit also assists our infirmities, especially in prayer, when we know not of ourselves how to pray, he intercedes for us with groanings not to be uttered, according to the pleasure of God, that we may truly pray according to the will of God, and this prayer, produced by the Holy Spirit, will infallibly be heard.

Why should the children of a king,
Go mourning all their days?
Great Comforter, descend and bring
Some tokens of thy grace.

OCTOBER XIX.

They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own rigteousness (*and being therefore not righteous,*) have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, Rom. x. 3, 10, 11. xi. 32.

Observe, says Luther, this most important text, which condemns all works of human righteousness, and proposes faith as the only means of obtaining the mercy of God. Both the heathens and the unconverted, especially some grave and specious Christians, have much righteousness of their own, which proves their hindrance in faith, and in the righteousness of Christ; for though they imagine themselves to be relying upon it in faith, it is only imagination, since in fact they rely upon this or that, upon external worship, alms, and the like. And though some

of them be wicked, they look upon others as worse, and still depend upon a righteousness of their own. Now he who desires to be justified and saved by faith in Christ, must, with a truly penitent and contrite heart, consider himself as unrighteous and wicked, be divested of all his own righteousness, hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ, be covered with it in faith, call upon the name of the Lord, and depend upon the mercy of God alone; so will he be justified, saved, and not put to shame.

Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.

But if Emanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sin.

OCTOBER XX.

Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour prefering one another: Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord: rejoice in hope; patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, Bless them which persecute you; mind not high things, &c. Be not wise in your own conceits. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Owe no man any thing, &c. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. ROM. xii. 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18. xiii. 8, 10.

THE apostle having in the former chapter proposed the doctrine and the value of faith, now exhorts to every kind of duty. So that man must be converted, and experience the mercy of God in faith, before he can properly discharge his duty; else it is all a mere specious external appearance. All these duties spring from love, which is the fulfilling of the law. This love cannot be fully discharged by works or alms, for we are still indebted to every man, and bound to shew kindness to him, as much as to ourselves. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, but every sort of good, and grows not weary or faint. It

extends even to enemies, and blesses them that persecute; it is not elated, nor minds high things, but condescends to men of low estate, to the poor, and seeks to live peaceably with all men; and as we may very easily deviate from the duties of love, we are taught to continue instant in prayer; for in prayer we adhere to him, who is love itself, and so continue in love.

Let Pharisees of high esteem
Their faith and zeal declare;
All their religion is a dream,
If love be wanting there.

OCTOBER XXI.

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For none of us liveth to himself, &c. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, &c. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let not then your good be evil spoken of. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. xiv. 1, 7, 8, 12, 16, 17.

Weak Christians made a conscience of eating this and that, and the strong were not sufficiently tender, and thus one judged the other. Hence St. Paul says (ver. 4.) "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" Every one lived and served, as a servant of Christ, his Lord, and what he did he did it unto the Lord, whether he ate any thing or not. Every one was to give account of himself, not of another. They were not, therefore, to corrupt their good, so as to let it be evil spoken of; for the kingdom of God consisted not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And in this respect we also are bound to serve Christ, and to lead a truly evangelical Christian life; so shall we please God, and be useful to men, whereas by uncharitable judgment we displease God, and hurt one another.

Not different food, or different dress,
Compose the kingdom of our Lord;
But peace, and joy, and righteousness,
Faith, and obedience to his word.

When weaker Christians we despise,
We do the gospel mighty wrong;
For God the gracious, and the wise,
Receives the feeble with the strong.

OCTOBER XXII.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus. The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. xv. 4, 5, 13. see also xvi. 20.

We are to consider the whole scripture as a letter addressed to us; for it is no longer of use to those to whom it was written, but it is to us. And if we have patience, we shall derive from the scriptures every comfort and hope. God himself is here called the God of patience and consolation, he has proved himself to be so by deed, and will have patience with us, and comfort us. We should also be distinguished as men of patience and consolation, bear with and comfort other men, and so be of one mind, or unanimous, yet according to Christ, for any other unanimity will profit nothing. God is also called a God of hope, and we shall, through the power of the Holy Ghost, have hope, strong hope, which will fill our minds with confidence, peace, and joy. Lord, grant that we may experience all this, and depart in thee with the full hope of everlasting life.

God, who in various methods told
His mind and will to saints of old,
Sent his own Son with truth and grace,
To teach us in these latter days.

OCTOBER XXIII.

God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end. &c. 1 Cor. i. 9, 7, 8.

The faithfulness of God is the foundation of all these

assurances, that we shall come behind in no gift, be confirmed unto the end, and blameless on the great day; for "God is faithful." He is that faithful God, who keepeth his promise for ever. His faithfulness is as great as himself, and it is impossible for him to lie, or to suffer his word to be unaccomplished, for sooner shall heaven and earth pass away. He has promised (Jer. xxxi. 14.) to satisfy his people with his goodness. He is faithful, and will fulfil it? we shall not lack any necessary gift; for, according to ver. 30. he hath made his Son to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He will also confirm us unto the end, and present us before him blameless on the great day; for he hath promised it, and being faithful, he will fulfil it. He himself hath called us to the fellowship of his Son, and therefore will keep us in that fellowship, and prepare, strengthen, and ground us in it, agreeably to his promise.

Great is the Lord, his works of might
Demand our noblest songs;
Let his assembled saints unite
Their harmony of tongues.

Great is the mercy of the Lord,
He gives his children food;
And, ever mindful of his word,
He makes his promise good.

OCTOBER XXIV.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. We are fools for Christ's sake. 1 Cor. ii. 14. iii. 19. iv. 90, 13.

The apostles appeared foolish to all natural men, as they do to this day, for suffering thirst, hunger, and blows, and being a curse and laughing-stock to the world. The merely natural men, especially the wise men of the world, still think the faithful fools, for suffering and enduring all things, for they neither perceive nor understand the things of the Spirit of God. Christ crucified, the method of

salvation, and the imitation of a suffering Saviour, are all foolishness and offence to them, however learned they may be, and however seemingly zealous for the pure doctrine; for he that would truly know Christ, and walk in the right road to salvation, must confess his folly, blindness, and total impotency, since by nature he cannot perceive or understand any thing truly, concerning the Spirit of God; he must humble himself, and pray for the Holy Spirit, else he cannot call Jesus Lord, all his wisdom is foolishness with God, and God will surprize him in his folly.

Our reason stretches all its wings,
And climbs above the skies;
But still how far beneath thy feet,
Our grovelling reason lies.

Lord, here we bend our humble souls,
And awfully adore;
For the weak pinions of our mind,
Can stretch a thought no more.

OCTOBER XXV.

Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, &c. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, &c. The time is short, &c. 1 Cor. v. 7. vi. 12, 19. vii. 29.

At the eating of the passover, every corner was cleansed from the leaven; he therefore who will enjoy Christ, the true passover, must be enabled to cleanse himself from the leaven of sin, from every uncleanness, and from all impure desires, which some Corinthians indulged; and even from all undue attachment to worldly matters, as not to engage in needless law suits, neither to be captivated by temporal things, as some Corinthians were. We should always consider, that the time is short, that we must possess all things as though we did not possess them. We should, in particular, remember, that we are not in the least our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore have no right to do what we please, but what our

Lord pleases, that we may praise him in body and soul, both being his gift. We ought, therefore, to apply only to his use all our powers of body and soul, and live unto him and serve him alone, as being living sacrifices appropriated to his glory.

Great God, what poor returns we pray
For love so infinite as thine?
Words are but air, and tongues but clay;
But thy compassion's all divine.

OCTOBER XXVI.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they lusted (*of whom it is written,*) The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. x. 6, 7.

Christians should abstain from all that may hinder them in their race and combat, since they are to obtain an incorruptible crown. St. Paul proposes himself as an example, saying, that he fights not at random, or beats the air, but keeps his body in subjection, &c. All teachers of every kind, and heads of families, should observe this, lest they should preach to others, and be themselves cast-aways. If in their combat they do not hit the old Adam, nor mortify his lusts, they only beat the air, however learned or zealous they may seem to be for the truth. Let none of us lust after evil things, as the Israelites did, lest we incur their punishment. But do not we sit down at our feasts to eat and drink to excess, and rise up to play, to visit plays and operas, to skip and dance; and all this in these evil times, to extinguish the little remaining good. But God has turned the sport of many to sorrow.

Though the dear path to thine above
Lies through this horrid land:
Lord, we would keep the heavenly road
And run at thy command.

OCTOBER XXVII.

Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God (*that is, neither to the wicked, nor to the good.*) Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, &c. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. xi. 1.

Here again the apostle proposes himself as an example, both to teachers and private Christians. They are directed to give offence to no man, whether good or bad, and thereby to please all men. But how? No otherwise than by pleasing others in order to their edification, not by seeking their own ends, their own profit or advantage, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. That is a despicable complacency, which arises from self-love, and seeks only its own glory or benefit; of this St. Paul says, Gal. i. 10. "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Every teacher should imitate Christ, who sought only the salvation of men, then he may say, "Be ye followers of me," &c. But no unconverted preacher can say this; he doth not follow Christ, and he will weaken the doctrine of the imitation of Christ, by his conversation, insomuch that men will imagine it useless or impossible to follow Christ, since their teachers do not set the example.

The wealthy sinners he contemns,
Loves all that fear the Lord;
And tho' to his own hurt he swears,
Yet he will keep his word.

OCTOBER XXVIII.

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. I Cor. xi. 30, 31, 32.

The apostle, in cautioning them against receiving the Lord's supper unworthily, advises self-examination, and says (ver. 29.) "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."

Alas! how few consider this! They who go on impenitently, and without self-examination, incur damnation or judgment, and this judgment is partly founded in this, that instead of confirming themselves in the faith, which indeed they have not, they confirm themselves in security, and grow the worse for imagining that the Lord's supper will set them right again. I am of opinion, that the unworthy receiving of the Lord's supper is partly the cause of the decay of Christianity. We see the believing Corinthians were visited with judgments, some by sickness, others by death, on account of some disorders at the Lord's supper. We should therefore judge and accuse ourselves, that we may not be judged; and though a temporal judgment may befal us, yet we shall not be condemned with the world.

Break off my fetters, Lord, and show
Which is the path my feet should go:
If snares and foes beset the road,
I fly to hide me near my God.

Teach me to do thy heavenly will,
And lead me to thy heavenly hill:
Let the good Spirit of thy love,
Conduct me to thy courts above.

OCTOBER XXIX.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 4, 31.

This more excellent way is charity, which St. Paul describes, chap. xiii. Whoever reads that, and examines himself, will humble himself, and attend to the apostle's advice, chap. xiv. 1. "Follow after charity;" and xvi. 14. "Let all your things be done with charity." For when faith and hope shall cease, charity will remain, and is therefore the greatest. We should continue stedfast in charity, and manifest it particularly by not severely judging or despising other Christians, as members of the same body, but rather administering to edifying and reforming

one another, not growing impatient or weary, in case reformation should not follow immediately. For we read, that "charity suffereth long, beareth all things, hopeth all things, and never faileth." This charity is not to be attained, but by confessing Jesus to be our Lord by the Holy Ghost; so shall we not judge uncharitably of others, who have the Holy Ghost. Where the Holy Ghost resides, men will certainly follow charity. But they who are contentious, and despise the children of God, have not the Holy Ghost, nor faith, however learned they may be.

Raised by his Father to the throne,
Christ sent his promised Spirit down,
With gifts and grace for rebel men,
That God might dwell on earth again.

OCTOBER XXX.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, &c. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 1 Cor. xv. 65, 58, xvi. 13.

If the faithful, or even the whole church, be so beset by enemies, as to be in apparent danger of being overpowered, yet they shall be delivered, for Christ must reign, till he hath finally put all enemies under his feet. His reign therefore still continues. He continues, like a warrior, to gird his sword upon his thigh, and to ride forth in defence of the truth, that his word and truth may not be subdued; and his wretched enemies are reduced to increase the glories of his sovereignty, by their mocking, scoffing, and persecution. His victory is ours, as we read, ver. 57. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory." We should not, therefore, be afraid, or stagger, grow faint and weary, and imagine the undertaking too difficult for us. No, we should stand fast, and abound in the work of the Lord, labour, and pray more and more, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain. Lord, grant that we may not be weary, but watch, and prevent the enemy from sowing his tares.

Where Christ displays his healing power
Death and the curse are known no more;
In him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honours to our king;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen.

OCTOBER XXXI.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Who comforteth us, &c. Who delivereth us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 10.

If there be neither mercy nor comfort any where else, it may be found with God; for, to our endless comfort, he is called and is the God of all comfort and mercy; who comforteth us not only in any particular, but in every tribulation, and it is then that we first know and experience him in faith to be our comforter; for tribulation should not weaken our faith, but our unbelief. God attacks the flesh by tribulation, unbelief is a work of the flesh. Now the more the flesh and the heart of unbelief is weakened, broken, humbled, and qualified for divine comfort, the more will God comfort us, and strengthen our faith, that we may administer the same comfort to others. Though our sufferings are many, yet we shall be abundantly comforted, and our measure will be exactly taken, so that nothing may exceed our powers. The Lord hath done this hitherto, and delivered us from distress; as he still delivers us, we have grounds to hope that he will continue to do it; for he hath promised, and all his promises are (ver. 20.) "yea and amen." God hath confirmed us in Christ, and sealed us with the Holy Spirit.

Firm as the earth thy gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust;
If I am found in Jesus' hands,
My soul can ne'er be lost.

NOVEMBER I.

Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph, &c. Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, &c. 2 Cor. ii. 14. iii. 4, 5. iv. 8, 9.

Whoever desires to be always victorious and blessed, must have been first enlightened (chap. iv. 6.) and qualified for it by God, as St. Paul here adds, "who hath also made us able ministers of the Spirit." He, therefore, who would duly exercise the ministry of the Spirit in all respects, must have the Holy Spirit; for without him we are not able even to think, much less to speak and act rightly, neither can we discharge any duty of the office faithfully. A preacher, without the Spirit, will often corrupt the word by misrepresenting or misapplying it; he will not "speak as of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God," much less will he endure tribulation and persecution for the sake of Christ; for he wants the Spirit of faith, which will speak, in spite of persecution. How necessary therefore is it, that all men should be enlightened and converted, and particularly preachers, for the sake of their office; for from that moment their qualification begins.

I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While his left hand my head sustains.

But if the Lord be once withdrawn,
And we attempt the work alone,
When new temptations spring and rise,
We find how great our weakness is.

NOVEMBER II.

Now he that hath wrought for us the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, &c. We then as workers together with him, beseech you also, &c. 2 Cor. v. 5, 6, 7, 17. iv. 11.

Whoever would be prepared for the kingdom and

house of God in heaven, must have the Holy Spirit, and be regenerated by him; spirit must be born of spirit, so that every thing in him may be new. Christ attests this by a solemn repeated affirmation, in John iii. How can a man, who always remains the old carnal man, expect the new heaven? Now we become new creatures in Christ, when in true repentance we acknowledge ourselves o be the enemies of God, and in faith apply to ourselves his atonement. This faith will give us comfort in affliction; for it regards not any thing visible, the object of it is nothing specious, nor any pleasing inward sensation, but the invisible God and his word; whence it is written, that "we walk by faith, not by sight." By virtue of this faith we are also workers together with God for the salvation of others, and so have not received the grace of God in vain, much less are employed with vain persons in another service.

We walk by faith of joys to come,
Faith lives upon his word;
But while our body is our home,
We're absent from the Lord.

NOVEMBER III.

Ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance, &c. 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10.

How careful and anxious should every teacher be, that his hearers may not receive injury either by his preaching or conversation; for this may easily happen. St. Paul himself felt some anxiety of this sort, as he confesses (ver. 5.) "we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears; nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus," particularly when he acquainted him, that the Corinthians were made sorry after a godly manner by St. Paul's epistles; so that he rejoiced the more. Thus the apostle was troubled, and considered himself as one of those that were cast down, but God comforted him so, that he says (ver. 4.) "I am filled with comfort, I am

exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." Because he had learned that the Corinthians were truly penitent, and sorry after a godly manner. Now this godly sorrow is not only necessary in the beginning of repentance and conversion, but in our daily repentance! for it worketh contrition and amendment unto salvation. No man will repent of having been sorry for his sins; for he shall certainly be comforted; whilst a sorrow merely on worldly accounts injures both soul and body, and the end thereof is often death.

Alas, and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree.

NOVEMBER IV.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, &c. That now at this time your abundance might be a supply for their wants, &c. He which soweth abundantly, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. viii. 9, 14. ix. 6, 7.

Jesus, though he was rich, became poor for our sakes, that we through his poverty might be rich. His poverty, therefore, and want are meritorious, and we shall be blessed with every spiritual blessing from his heavenly treasures; for he is the same Lord, rich unto all them that call upon him. We should ponder this in faith, and thereby be constrained to communicate abundantly to the poor, that our abundance may be a supply to the wants of others, and that there may be an equality, as we read (ver. 15.) "He that had gathered much (of the manna) had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." Nor should our alms be given grudgingly, but bestowed as a blessing, and we should be cheerful givers, since Jesus so willingly condescended to become poor for our sakes;

and as God loveth a cheerful giver, he will return unto us a plentiful harvest both here below and in heaven, that we may abound in every gift. Thus the more we give, the more we shall receive, if influenced by the free grace of Christ.

Blessings for ever on the Lamb,
Who bore the curse for wretched men;
Let angels sound his sacred name,
And ev'ry creature say amen.

NOVEMBER V.

I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. See also ver. 4, 13, 14. *where the false and deceitful workers are mentioned.*

All ministers should, like St. Paul, be jealous with a godly jealousy, that they may present souls as chaste virgins to Christ; and not content themselves with awakening them in some degree, and making half christians, but such as give up, like a bride, their whole hearts to the Lord Jesus, and do not commit fornication with the world. And when these are truly converted, they should take care to keep them in the service of Christ, and not suffer them to be corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel. But how can this affectionate jealousy exist, if the teacher be not himself converted to Christ, and love him? Such an one is more likely to corrupt souls from their simplicity. Every Christian should also take care of himself, that he be not seduced by the old serpent from the simplicity that is in Christ. This simplicity consists in depending on Christ only and not on men; in relying singly upon his atonement, in continuing stedfast in the word and in prayer, and in considering all those as deceitful workers who attempt to seduce us from the word of God to dark speculations, and to lead us away from the narrow path, to lose sight of our great object.

Who knows the errors of his thoughts
My God, forgive my secret faults,
And from presumptuous sins restrain;
Accept my poor attempts of praise,
That I have read thy book of grace
And book of nature, not in vain.

NOVEMBER VI.

When I am weak, then am I strong; therefore (*says the apostle in the preceding words*) I take pleasure in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Finally, brethren, farewel, &c. 2 Cor. xii. 10, 9. xiii. 11.

These are not sinful infirmities, of which we cannot boast, but inward and outward sufferings, by which we are humbled, stript of our own power, made sensible of our weakness, and become partakers of the divine power; for by these words, says Luther, Christ comforts all who are weak and troubled, since he cannot shew forth his power and comfort, unless we are weak and suffer. So that we need not be afraid of sufferings, or anxious lest we should be weakened by them, or sink under them. No, we shall be strengthened; for if, in our sufferings, our own power and strength should fail, so as to make us sensible of our weakness, the power of Christ will be mighty, or accomplished in us, and arrive at its purpose. We should then rely more firmly upon grace, and content ourselves therewith. By this means we shall at length rejoice, and be comforted, be of one mind, have peace, and experience the God of peace is ours, and, according to ver. 14. the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost will be with us.

Had not the Lord, my rock, my help,
Sustained my fainting head,
My life had now in silence dwelt,
My soul among the dead.

Alas, my sliding feet, I cried,
Thy promise was my prop:
Thy grace stood constant by my side,
Thy Spirit bore me up.

NOVEMBER VII.

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, &c. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, &c. GAL. ii. 19. iii. 24, 26, 27, 28.

BY faith in the gospel, as being the law of the Spirit, we are, as Luther says, dead to the law, so that we are no longer indebted to it, need not seek our justification there, for it cannot curse, condemn, or compel us; for Christ, in his death on the cross, died to the law, and we are crucified with him, his death is imputed to us, so that together with him we are crucified; his death on the cross is imputed to us, and we are together with him dead to sin and to the law. But to what purpose? that we may live unto God, and serve him freely in the new service of the Spirit. Hence the more we are freed from the law, the more shall we live unto God; for Christ himself will live in us, and we shall consider ourselves as invested with Christ and his righteousness in baptism, so that no law can condemn us. And being become children of God, we shall have that filial willing spirit, which will prompt us to live unto God and to serve him freely, without the compulsion of the law.

Deep in the dust before thy throne,
Our guilt and our disgrace we own;
Great God, we own th' unhappy name,
Whence sprung our nature and our shame.

We sing thine everlasting Son,
Who joined our nature to his own:
Adam the second, from the dust,
Raises the ruins of the first.

NOVEMBER VIII.

But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Against such there is no law. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, &c. GAL. v. 18, 23. vi. 15, 16.

THE apostle had before exhorted us to walk in the Spirit, and not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Now if we are so led and prompted by the Spirit, that though the flesh should lust against the spirit yet it cannot prevail, then we are no longer under the law, so as to be cursed or compelled by it. In ver. 22. St. Paul enumerates the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering," &c. and adds, "against such there is no law;" it cannot condemn us, though these fruits should still be imperfect, provided we are enabled to manifest ourselves new creatures, by a change and reformation of our hearts, without which nothing eternal will avail us. But if we walk after this rule of the new creature, and become true Israelites, or champions, we shall infallibly have peace and mercy, and not else. How necessary it is for us to possess the real new birth, a change and conversion of the heart, and to walk in the spirit always.

What different powers of grace and sin
Attend our mortal state?
I hate the thoughts that work within,
And do the works I hate.

Now I complain, and groan, and die,
While sin and Satan reign:
Now raise my songs of triumph high,
For grace prevails again.

Thus will the flesh and spirit strive,
And vex and break my peace;
But I shall quit this mortal life,
And sin for ever cease.

NOVEMBER IX.

I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, &c. EPH. i. 16, 18.

THE apostle had said before of the Ephesians, and consequently of us, if we believe, that God had abundantly blessed us with all spiritual blessings, &c. having made us accepted in the beloved, that is, in Christ, "to the praise

of the glory of his grace;" and that "after we believed, he sealed us with the Holy Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance," so that our blessed inheritance is insured to us by an epistle, a seal, and a pledge. And (chap. ii. 13, 14.) by the blood of Christ we are brought nigh, and need not, like slaves, stand afar off in fear, for he, Jesus himself, is our peace. How great is that peace which dissipates fear and doubt! since Jesus himself is our peace, and his Spirit our seal and pledge. Yet amidst these glorious blessings, the apostle prays that God would enlighten their eyes, and give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him. This shews, that we should daily improve in the knowledge of God, and pray to God for it; so shall we certainly be enlightened, however blind we may find ourselves, and we shall become better acquainted with our God as the Father of glory.

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below,
Celestial fruits on earthly ground,
From faith and hope may grow.

NOVEMBER X.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened, &c. EPH. iii. 14, 15, 16. read on to ver. 21.

THIS is a prayer, and a form fit to be used by ministers for their congregations, and by all Christians for themselves; it may be used as a daily prayer; we should offer it up in faith, and not think we ask too much. No, God will do exceedingly more for us than we can either ask or understand. Whatever we ask, he will grant us still more; for though we are sinners, yet Jesus hath received gifts even for sinners, and to every one of us (ver. 7.) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, that we may enjoy all things richly. Christ being rich towards all them that call upon him. O God, thou art our Father, reconciled to us in Christ; grant us

therefore power, according to the riches of thy glory, not according to the narrowness of our hearts. We stand in need of great power, for we have great enemies, strengthen us by thy Spirit in the inner man. Lord Jesus, do thou dwell in our hearts, and grant us to be rooted in thy love, that we may know it more and more, that it may be shed abroad in our hearts, and that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell
By faith and love in every breast;
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel,
The joys that cannot be expressed.

Come, fill our hearts with inward strength,
Make our enlarged souls possess,
And learn the height, and breadth, and length,
Of thine unmeasurable grace.

NOVEMBER XI.

But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love. Be ye therefore followers of God, &c. Eph. iv. 15, 16. v. 1, 2.

The apostle exhorts to unity and love, that we may grow up to Christ our head, edifying and improving each other, and all this in love; for love tends to improvement. We are to consider ourselves as members of one body, and administer to each other by our life, conversation, and prayer; and to move us the more effectually to this, he says, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." How great love hath God manifested toward us, in sending us his Son, in loving, cherishing, and providing for us as his children. This should move us to give up ourselves to mutual offices of love, and to become like him; and instead of contending and quarrelling, to live and walk in love. The example of Christ should incite us to this, he having so loved us, that he gave himself for us, an offering to God, of a sweet-smelling savour. By the offering of Christ, which is a sweet-swelling savour before God, we and our prayers are become a sweet in-

cense, dear and acceptable to God, and our hearts should also be disposed to mutual love towards each other,

Jesus, my Saviour, and my Judge,
Great all in all to me:
Shall I to saints their portion grudge,
Who owe my all to thee?

Lord, what a faithless wretch were I,
This honour to refuse,
And to thy saints their share deny,
And my great trust abuse.

NOVEMBER XII.

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Eph. v. 30.

The apostle had admonished both husbands and wives, the wives to be subject to their husbands, as the church is to Christ, and the husbands to love their wives, as Christ loves his church. They should therefore have the same mind in them, which was also in Christ Jesus; they should love their wives as their own bodies; for he that loves his wife, loves himself; since no man ever hated his own flesh. We learn from this particularly, how intimately the faithful are united with Christ, and beloved by him. He presents them to himself by his blood and Spirit, as a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle. Then are we cleansed in him and perfect after justification, and shall be more and more cleansed and sanctified by him. We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones, any one spirit with him. Now as we do not hate the members of our own bodies, our own flesh, but love, support, and cherish them; so neither can Christ hate us as his flesh and bones, but will love, support, and cherish us; for in loving us, he loves himself also. Now if we have no doubt that we love our members, or that Christ loveth himself, we need not doubt that Christ will love us, though we be very frail members: for if any of our members are broken, we still love them, and rather take the more care of them, in order to heal them. O how

intimate is this communion and bliss! If we understood it rightly, we might draw comfort from it in death.

Our heavenly Father calls
Christ and his members one:
We, the young children of his love,
And he, the first-born Son.

NOVEMBER XIII.

Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. EPH. vi. 8, 11. read on to ver. 18.

ST. PAUL had before admonished children and parents, masters and servants, and more especially the latter, not to serve their masters with eye service, but in simplicity of heart, and to remember, that they served the Lord, and would be rewarded by him, even as dutiful children would prosper, according to ver. 4. At last he comes to this conclusion, that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord. Thus we are to do every thing unto the Lord, according to his will, and to look for our reward from him alone, consequently not to cease from doing good, though no man should know or reward it. If the devil, the flesh, and the world should attempt to hinder us, and we should feel ourselves weak, then we are to be strong in the Lord (ver. 10.) and in the power of his might, and entirely to despair of our own strength, but never of the power of God. We are to put on the whole armour of God, to cover and equip ourselves with it, that not the least part may remain uncovered, where the enemy may attack us; the righteousness of Christ is to be our breast-plate, faith our helmet, and the Spirit our sword, that thus armed we may have recourse to prayer in all our wants.

Arise my soul, my joyful powers
And triumph in my God;
Awake my voice, and loud proclaim
His glorious grace abroad.

Satan may vent his sharpest spite,
And all his legions roar:
Almighty mercy guards my life,
And bounds his raging power.

NOVEMBER XIV.

To me to live is Christ, and to die his gain. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. PHIL. i. 21. iii. 7. read on to ver. 10.

BOTH passages shew us the very heart of the apostle, what was his great object, his life, and what ought to be ours. Christ alone, with his perfect eternal righteousness, was his life, his inward eternal life. As Christ lived in him, and he in Christ, to die could not but be gain to him, because Christ was his life in the midst of death, and brought him through death to the full enjoyment of eternal life. Hence, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, he counted all his former advantages and his own righteousness as loss and dung, and this last he repeats thrice. We therefore should estimate all our own righteousness as loss and dung, be only solicitous to win Christ, and be found in him, that we may no longer derive our righteousness from the law; but possess that, which we receive by faith, which is quite perfect, and entirely covers us; so that with it we may joyfully face death, and appear before the judgment of God. Then shall we have the power of his resurrection, and be enabled to say, as we read, chap. iv. 13. "I can do all things," &c.

Let the vain world pronounce it shame,
And fling their scandals on the cause;
We come to boast our Saviour's name,
And make our triumphs in his cross.

With joy we tell the scoffing age,
He that was dead has left his tomb;
He lives above their utmost rage,
And we are waiting till he come.

NOVEMBER XV.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, &c. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, &c. For many walk, &c. PHIL. i. 27. ii. 15. iii. 18, 19, 20.

CHRISTIANS ought to shine as lights in the midst of a perverse world, as stars in the firmament, and to walk as

the children of God, as becometh the gospel, without rebuke; and so much the more, as so many walk after the flesh, by which the apostle means, chiefly carnal teachers, whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, who are earthly-minded, and therefore enemies of the cross of Christ, and seduce others from it, which the apostle observes with tears. The earthly-minded men of the present age, and their teachers, are still enemies of the cross of Christ, and when they mislead other men from the narrow path of the cross, and from following Christ, the faithful children and servants of God are moved to tears and prayers, and to say with St. Paul, Gal. v. 12. "I would they were even cut off who trouble you;" and with David, Psal. cxxix. 6. "Let them be as the grass upon the house tops, which withereth before it groweth up." God will hear this prayer, and fulfil what we read in 2 Tim. iii. 9.

Perpetual blessings from above
Incompass me around;
But O how few returns of love
Hath my Creator found.

What have I done for him that died
To save my wretched soul?
How are my follies multiplied,
Fast as my minutes roll?

NOVEMBER XVI.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, &c. Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, &c. Col. i. 12, 27. ii. 6, 7, 8.

If the inheritance be an inheritance of the saints in light, no man can attain to it without sanctification. But the faithful, when they are poor in spirit, should consider, how great things God hath already done for them, that they may be thankful to him, and strengthen themselves in the faith. He hath delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of his

Son, in whom (ver. 14.) they have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, and Christ himself is in them the hope of glory, that they may have in their hearts a firm hope of the inheritance in heaven; for Jesus, the Lord of that inheritance, is himself in them their hope. Now they should be rooted in this, and stablished in the faith, and beware of every thing that may weaken and stagger them in the faith. And their danger, even at this time, is from philosophy, when they have more taste for that than for the word of God, and insist upon a rational demonstration of every thing, before they believe the word in simplicity, or pray for faith.

Behold what wond'rous grace
The Father hath bestowed,
On sinners of a mortal race,
To call them sons of God.

NOVEMBER XVII.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful. Giving thanks always for all things. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers. Col. iii. 15. Eph. v. 20. 1 Thess. i. 2.

The peace of God should rule in our hearts, and so keep us, that we may not complain as unbelievers, nor be filled with a servile fear, but on the contrary, always give thanks to God; for if I have peace with God, and Christ himself is my peace and my hope, why should I complain? Hence Luther says, "May that peace govern and preserve you in all temptation, that ye may not murmur against God, but be bold in him, he himself having said, In the world ye have tribulation, in me ye shall have peace." We should always give thanks, and for all things; then all things will be unto us grace and favour and blessing. And if we are always giving thanks to God, we shall have no time left for complaints. But we should continue persevering in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving, that we may not leave off praying when we give thanks, nor giving thanks when we pray; for we are apt

to forget the one, and to remember our petitions better than our thanksgivings. To these we are to add intercessions and thanksgivings for others, which should be observed particularly by teachers.

Joy to the saints and peace belongs,
The Lord protects their days;
Let Israel tune immortal songs
To his almighty grace.

NOVEMBER XVIII.

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 1 THESS. i. 3, 4.

IF faith be the work of God, the labour of love and patience of hope is so too; for faith worketh by love; it receives pure love from God, and pure love flows from it. If faith be genuine, it worketh patience, patience produces experience and hope, and hope again produces patience. Jesus is here again stiled our hope, and that in the sight of God and our father; we may therefore hope for the best from him through Christ, and need not fear his wrath, for according to ver. 10, Jesus hath "delivered us from the wrath to come, and God hath not designed us for wrath. His gospel will come unto us in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; for Jesus himself will be our hope, and his spirit our seal and pledge on the day of redemption. So that we have very great assurance, and may be comforted and established in death.

Let them neglect thy glory, Lord,
We never knew thy grace;
But our loud songs shall still record
The wonders of thy praise.

NOVEMBER XIX.

But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. Wherefore also we pray for you, that our God would count you

worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. 1 THESS. v. 8. 2 THESS. i. 11.

WE should watch and be sober, like children of the day, or of light, not sleep and be intoxicated with the love of the world, like other men; we should put on faith and love as our breast-plate or helmet. St. Paul makes one breast-plate of faith and love, and unites them intimately together; we therefore should cover ourselves with both at once, if we would withstand the enemy, and have the helmet of hope. Faith, love, and hope must here be inseparable. Let us join with St. Paul in this prayer. Lord, make us worthy of thy calling, that we may walk worthily of our great calling to glory, as becomes blessed children, and heavenly heirs of God, so that nothing earthly may get possession of us. Fulfil all the good pleasure of thy goodness, since nothing can be well pleasing to thy goodness and love, but what is for our salvation. Fulfil also in us the work of faith in power, that our faith may enjoy every good in Christ, and be thereby strengthened, and that the name of Jesus Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him.

Now let my soul arise
And tread the tempter down;
My captain leads me forth
To conquest and a crown.
A feeble saint shall win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way.

NOVEMBER XX.

Now our Lord Jesus himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, &c. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, &c. 2 THESS. ii. 16, 17. iii. 3, 5. See also ver. 16. The Lord of peace himself give you peace.

GOD hath also loved us, so as to give us his Son, the Son of his bosom, and he hath thereby already given us everlasting consolation, and good or certain hope; for Jesus the consolation of Israel, and even the consolation

of the Gentiles, is himself our everlasting consolation and our hope, and thus our comfort will pass on through affliction and death into eternal life. May he now strengthen us in every good word and work, and keep us, since he is faithful, by his power, from all evil, that, though ever so seducing, it may not overpower us so as to become unfaithful. May he direct our hearts to the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ, that the sufferings of Christ may give rest to our hearts in the love of God, and in patience, that we may patiently follow him, so shall we have peace of every kind, and every where.

Thus far the Lord has led me on;
Thus far his power prolongs my days;
And every evening shall make known,
Some fresh memorial of his grace.

NOVEMBER XXI.

Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. This charge I commit unto thee, &c. 1 Tim. i. 5, 6, 7, 18, 19.

Faith unfeigned, charity out of a pure heart and a good conscience, should be joined together in all men, but especially in teachers. They should be eminent champions for Jesus Christ, fight a good fight, preserve faith and a good conscience; else they will turn to vain jangling or scholastic altercation, pretending to be masters of the scriptures, and great divines, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. O that all men would accompany their knowledge with a good conscience. But no one has that by nature; in order to obtain it, he must first be enabled to consider his sinful misery, and consequently feel his evil conscience; for God, says Luther, makes evil consciences first, and afterward good ones. When he feels the smart of his evil conscience, he must come to Jesus with faith and repent-

ance, that by virtue of his purifying blood he may be cleansed of his evil conscience.

The Lord on high proclaims
His Godhead from his throne;
Mercy and Justice are the names
By which I will be known.

In thee shall Israel trust,
And see their guilt forgiven;
God will pronounce the sinner just,
And take the saints to heaven.

NOVEMBER XXII.

Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, &c. Exercise thyself unto godliness; for bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, &c. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. 1 TIM. iii. 16. iv. 7, 8, 9.

GODLINESS, in order to be genuine, must flow from the right principle of faith. The principle is, that God was manifest in the flesh. The incarnation, life, passion, and death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, all his going about, his watching and sleeping, all that he said and did, are meritorious, and were intended for our redemption. All this must be received in a penitent and faithful heart; there this principle of faith must be grounded, whence proceeds true godliness in Christ Jesus, which will enable us to endure persecution with a becoming, ready, and powerful spirit; all the rest, how specious soever it may appear, is only dry morality. We must exercise ourselves in this godliness daily, for it is profitable unto all things, and eminently useful to a teacher; for if he be not godly, he is insipid salt; of what use is such an one, how can he claim to himself a single promise?

The wond'ring world inquires to know
Why I should love my Jesus so:
What are his charms, say they, above
The objects of a mortal love?

Yes, my beloved to my sight
Shews a sweet mixture, red and white:
All human beauties, all divine,
In my beloved meet and shine.

White is his soul, from blemish free,
Red with the blood he shed for me;
The fairest of ten thousand fairs,
A sun among ten thousand stars.

NOVEMBER XXIII.

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, &c. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was (*Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses.*) 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 Tim. iii. 1, 9.

They who are not godly themselves, will certainly not adhere to the pure doctrine of scripture, but by their life and conversation seduce men from godliness and from the narrow way, in order to make a trade of religion, or of their office; they will resist other faithful ministers, who duly discharge their office, and raise many strifes of words. But they shall not proceed very far; their angry, virulent, and opprobrious language will expose them to the scorn and contempt of all men, even to the ridicule of children. This should encourage the faithful servants of God to go on labouring, praying, enduring, persevering, and hoping; so will the Lord assist them, and make the worst events turn out the best.

While Jews on their own law rely
And Greeks of wisdom boast,
I love the incarnate mystery,
And there I fix my trust.

NOVEMBER XXIV.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Tim. vi. 6. read on to ver. 12. But thou, O man of God, flee these things. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, &c. ver. 11, 17—19.

He that is godly, and therefore has faith, is possessed of Christ, the greatest gain and treasure, and being contented, he has even in a temporal sense, great gain and riches; for he is not rich who hath much, but he who can abstain from much, and be contented. The apostle also warns against covetousness, as the root of all evil; for they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, which will draw them into perdition. He says to Timothy, from such withdraw thyself. How much more necessary is this admonition to us and to all teachers, to flee covetousness; for it lies deeply concealed like a root in the heart. The rich are not to be high-minded, which they often are; for wealth begets wantonness and insolence. Nor are they to trust in uncertain riches, which they have to-day, and may lose to-morrow, or at least cannot enjoy; but they are to trust only in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; then shall they heap up wealth and treasures in heaven.

Men's portion oft times lies below,
'Tis all the happiness they know,
'Tis all they seek; they take their shares,
And leave the rest among their heirs.

NOVEMBER XXV.

I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, &c. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. 2 Tim. i. 12, 13. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 7, 8. See ver. 19. The foundation of God standeth sure, &c.

Every Christian may and will be assured of his faith and salvation, but he must keep the saving doctrine as a trust in his hands. And how? By the Holy Ghost. He, therefore, who hath not the Holy Ghost, will not duly keep the pure word of God, nor teach, at least not apply and divide it rightly. But the assurance of faith is the effect of a struggle, which we often know not how to

endure, but the Lord will give us understanding in all things by his word. We must constantly remember the resurrection of Jesus. All his enemies could not keep him in the grave with their stone, their seal, and their watch; these served only to make his resurrection the more glorious. Now his power and victory are ours. He, our Surety, has fully discharged all our debt, wherefore God hath raised him up; thus we are freed from all guilt and punishment, and have inward peace and strength.

Lord, when thou didst ascend on high,
Ten thousand angels fill'd the sky;
Those heavenly guards around thee wait,
Like chariots that attend thy state.

How bright the triumph none can tell,
When the rebellious powers of hell,
Who thousand souls had captives made,
Were all in chains like captives led.

NOVEMBER XXVI.

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, &c. That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. Preach the word, be instant, &c. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. Make full proof of thy ministry. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. iv. 2, 3, 5.

The word of God should be learnt from our youth, and so that we may not only speculatively know it, but that it may make us wise unto salvation; that it may teach, strengthen, amend, correct, and direct us; that we may be men of God, furnished unto all good works. This concerns all, especially preachers, who should first suffer themselves to be made wise, reproved, amended, and chastised. Else they are not qualified to discharge their office faithfully, they will not be ready to suffer for the word; but they will preach to please their hearers, who cannot bear the truth. Now the present is that evil time, when men, and even those who aim at holy orders, will not bear the wholesome doctrine of

repentance and conversion, but provide for themselves such teachers as may gratify their itching ears. They turn away their ears from the truth to fables and useless things. Faithful teachers should be the more watchful and earnest, and other Christians should pray the more for faithful labourers.

Thy grace shall dwell upon my tongue,
And while my lips rejoice,
The men who hear my sacred song,
Shall join their cheerful voice.

Thy glorious deeds of antient date
Shall through the world be known;
Thine arm of power, thy heavenly state,
With public splendour shown.

NOVEMBER XXVII.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, &c. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and shall preserve me, &c. 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 18.

The first verse has been often chosen as a text for a funeral sermon, by persons who have not fought a good fight, who have not even begun to walk in the narrow path, and to wrestle for the faith: how then can they be said to have finished their course, to have kept the faith, and hope for the crown? They must first repent and be converted, begin their course in the straight way, and fight the good fight of faith. If we have done this, we must go on daily and run the race which is set before us, keep the faith, and contend for it; for every thing will attempt to seduce us from it; faith has more enemies than any thing else. Lord Jesus! thou art He that keepeth faith for ever, grant that we may keep it, and happily finish our course; direct our hearts perpetually to that crown, deliver us from all evil, and lead us through adversity and death to thy heavenly kingdom. To thee be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

With heavenly weapons I have fought
The battles of the Lord,
Finished my course, and kept the faith
And wait a sure reward.

God hath laid up in heaven for me
A crown which cannot fade;
The Righteous Judge, at that great day,
Shall place it on my head.

NOVEMBER XXVIII.

They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, &c. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine, &c. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works, &c. that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. TITUS i. 16. ii. 1, 7, 8.

ALL true knowledge is, according to chap. 1. an acknowledgment of the truth, which is after godliness, for the whole of divine truth and doctrine leads in each and every part to godliness, and the hope of everlasting life. He, therefore, who is not godly, hath no right knowledge, and is disqualified for every good work, particularly for the faithful discharge of the ministerial office; though he advances many truths, yet by not shewing himself a pattern of good works in the course of his life, he demolishes by his practice the edifice which he had raised by his precepts. He obstructs the faith, and consequently the power of the word. His people think it impossible, or needless, to live as he teaches, because he does not live so himself. Hence we read, that a bishop must be blameless, and therefore himself truly converted; he must be as a steward of God, in order to give to every one his due in the house of God; but an unconverted teacher doth not understand this; for he hath not yet received what is necessary for himself: thus he gives occasion to the people to speak evil of him, and esteem him an hypocrite.

Thus saith the just, the great command,
Let all thy inward parts unite
To love thy Maker and thy God,
With utmost vigour and delight.

Then shall thy neighbour, next in place,
Share thine affections and esteem;
And let thy kindness to thyself
Measure and rule thy love to him.

NOVEMBER XXIX.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, and to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, &c. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, &c. These things I will that thou affirm. TITUS iii. 1—8.

WE are to be ready to every good work, and gentle, shewing meekness unto all men. And why? Because we were heretofore foolish and wicked, and God had patience with us. He hath justified us and brought us to salvation, not for our works, but solely from his grace and mercy. This should move us the more earnestly to every good work, he having abundantly poured out upon us his Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to do it.

Our souls adore God's throne supreme
And bless his Providence;
For magistrates of meaner name,
Our glory and defence.

Kingdoms on firm foundations stand,
While virtue finds reward;
And sinners perish from the land,
By justice and the sword.

NOVEMBER XXX.

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, that the communication of thy faith may become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing, which is in you in Christ Jesus. TITUS iii. 14. PHILEM. 4, 6.

THE faithful should ever improve in the knowledge and enjoyment of the good things which we have in Christ, and so advance further in the gospel, considering the whole gospel as a letter sent to them, as it still promises and offers to them every good thing; for that which was written before, was written for our learning, comfort, and hope, we should embrace it all immediately,

as now offered and presented to us, and as our property. By this acknowledgment our faith will grow powerful, strong, full, sure, and firm, and it will become active in love and good works. Thus the divine knowledge will bring us grace, peace, and all things pertaining to life and godliness, and not suffer us to be unfruitful; then will all our works flow directly from faith, and we shall not only do some good now and then, but shall be found in the habit of good works, for every necessary occasion and use.

Save me, O Lord, from every foe,
In thee my trust I place;
Though all the good that I can do,
Can ne'er deserve thy grace.

Yet if my God prolong my breath,
The saints may profit by't;
The saints, the glory of the earth,
The men of my delight.

His hand provides my constant food,
He fills my daily cup;
Much I am pleased with present good,
But more rejoice in hope.

DECEMBER I.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, &c. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5.

Whoever entertains a true hope of the eternal inheritance, and would in like manner bless God for it, must be regenerate and become a true child of God; for it is written, "If we are children, then are we heirs." He therefore who is fallen off from his baptismal covenant, and returned to his carnal mind, must be born again, as we find it enforced by two affirmations in John iii. Now he who is born again, hath a sure hope of the eternal inheritance by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As surely as Jesus is risen from the dead, he shall be raised to a life and inheritance eternal. And if his faith be so weak, that he is doubtful how to pass through

adversity in death, then he has a comfort before him in the words, which assure him, that he shall be kept by the power of God unto salvation, and that, according to ver. 7. this trial of his faith shall not weaken it, but render it the more precious.

Blest be the everlasting God,
The Father of our Lord;
Be his abounding mercy praised,
His majesty adored.

When from the dead he raised his Son,
And called him to the sky,
He gave our souls a lively hope
That they should never die.

DECEMBER II.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you, &c. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. 1 Pet. ii. 9, 15, 20, 21. See also ver. 11, 12.

Christians being spiritual priests, should edify themselves for an holy priesthood, proclaim the virtue, the power, the glory of Jesus Christ, by their life and conversation, and therefore, like strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts; for these not only war against the soul, but wound it, and prevent edification, whilst they give the enemy occasion to accuse us as evil doers. We should on the contrary let them see our good works, and with well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. If we must suffer for well-doing, we should consider it as a favour from God, and look up to Christ, who went about doing good, suffered patiently for us, and thereby left us an example that we should follow his steps. We should, therefore, in all our actions and sufferings, recollect, What did my Saviour do? I will follow his steps.

Dear Saviour, change our faith to sight,
Let sin for ever die;
Then shall our souls be all delight,
And every tear be dry.

DECEMBER III.

Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. Be ready always to give an answer, &c. with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. They think it strange, that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. 1 PET. iii. 14, 15, 16. iv. 4.

CHRISTIANS ought not to bring sufferings on themselves by their own perverseness, as Peter did before his fall; yet they must expect to suffer; hence we read (ver. 17.) "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing;" after which he again refers us (ver. 18.) to the patient suffering of Christ, who was so innocent, and suffered so much for our sakes. Him we are admonished to follow. It appears strange indeed to the men of the world, who will not hear of the imitation of Christ, that we run not with them to the same excess of riot; and they speak evil of us or threaten us. We are not to be afraid of their terror, nor troubled, but we are to be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us; which answer must be given with meekness, as Peter answered his accusers on the day of Pentecost. And all who have reproached the good lives of God's faithful servants in Christ shall be put to confusion; no one shall hurt us, if we follow after that which is good.

In vain the sons of earth or hell
Tell me a thousand frightful things;
My God in safety makes me dwell,
Beneath the shadow of his wings.

DECEMBER IV.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but

rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, &c. If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, &c. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 PET. iv. 12, 13, 16, 17, 18.

CHRISTIANS should not think sufferings strange; for their head hath suffered; him they should follow, and suffer with Christ for the sake of Christ, which is matter of comfort and joy to them; it is the Christian's glory, and will be rewarded by Christ with everlasting joy and bliss. They should not suffer as evil-doers, plunging themselves into distress by their own misconduct, but as Christians; and they should glorify God on the occasion, by praising his dispensation, his just judgment in the flesh; for Christians are still encumbered with flesh, which must be continually mortified. Therefore the judgment of God must begin with the house of God, and since the righteous shall scarcely, or with difficulty, be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? how shall they fare in the present times of judgment? and how shall they escape everlasting judgment and destruction? Alas! do we not in these times perceive the wrath of God against sin?

Eternal King, I fear thy name,
Teach me to know how frail I am;
And when my soul must hence remove,
Give me a mansion in thy love

DECEMBER V.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, &c. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 1 PET. v. 8, 10.

SATAN comes sometimes like a roaring lion, with vehement persecution, sometimes in the shape of a cunning serpent. We should therefore be sober, abstaining from a love of the world, perpetually watching, praying, and holding fast the word in faith; such a faith will enable us to withstand him by the word, and by prayer,

and even to extinguish his fiery darts. Though we suffer, we should remember, that the same afflictions are accomplished in our brethren; and that God, being the God of all grace, will permit no affliction to press too long, or beyond that we are able. Our afflictions endure but a short time, and he hath called us to everlasting glory. By sufferings he will make us perfect, and stablish, strengthen, settle us. Now as he is the God of all grace, we must continue faithfully to depend upon his grace in Christ, and make that our foundation, upon which we must build first and last.

Now Satan comes with dreadful roar,
And threatens to destroy;
He worries whom he can't devour,
With a malicious joy.

He feeds our hope with airy dreams,
Or fills with slavish fear;
And holds us still in wide extremes,
Presumption or despair.

DECEMBER VI.

Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. 2 PET. i. 5, 6, 7.

St. PETER had shewn before, that grace and peace would be multiplied unto us, through the knowledge of God and Christ, and that the divine power will give us all things. He next proceeds to exhort to various duties and virtues. We must therefore be first converted to Christ, and obtain grace, peace, and power, else all our virtues are mere hypocrisy. If these virtues be not of the genuine sort, we are not yet arrived at a true living knowledge. If we are, and have at the same time grace, peace, and power, we must not sit down idle, but give all diligence to improve in virtue. And the whole must result from faith, whence cometh virtue and power or strength. To this must be added discretion or knowledge, that we may discern and know what is right or

wrong, and temperance will enable us to abstain from that which we know to be wrong. As this may prove difficult, patience is necessary, and we must use the more diligence to make our calling and election sure, that we may at length make a glorious entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there:
But wisdom shows a narrower path
With here and there a traveller.

Great King of grace, my heart subdue,
I would be led in triumph too,
A willing captive to my Lord,
And sing the victories of his word.

DECEMBER VII.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, &c. He is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, &c. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, &c. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God. 2 Pet. ii. 9. iii. 3—12.

How great is the pre-eminence of the righteous above the ungodly! God delivers them in all his judgments against the wicked, as he did Noah, ver. 5. and Lot, ver. 7. He not only delivers them from all temptation, but gives them victory and a blessing at the last, so that all things work together for their good. Though we are frail, he is long-suffering toward us. He is long-suffering even toward the careless, and waits for their repentance; for he is by no means willing that any should perish, but that all should be converted, and is ready to give to every man grace for repentance. This should invite the careless to turn, and encourage the faithful to be always better prepared by daily repentance for the great day, earnestly hastening and patiently waiting for the coming of the day of God.

Arise, my soul, awake my voice,
And tunes of pleasure sing:
Loud Hallelujahs shall address
My Saviour and my King.

The arms of everlasting love
Beneath my soul he placed;
And on the rock of ages set
My slippery footsteps fast.

DECEMBER VIII.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And now, little children, abide in him, &c. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, &c. 1 JOHN i. 9. ii. 28. iii. 1.

IF we do not acknowledge and confess our sins, we deceive ourselves, and our sins are not forgiven; but if we penitently confess them, and seek for remission in the blood of Jesus, his faithfulness, and even his justice, will move him to pardon and cleanse us from all unrighteousness; for he hath promised both. Being faithful, he must keep his promise, and being just, he cannot punish sin twice; at the same time he can by no means allow any sin to have dominion over us. We should therefore continually abide in our faithful Saviour, and be cleansed by his blood and Spirit; so shall we have joy on the day of judgment, and not be put to confusion. Let us likewise remember the love and grace which God hath shewed toward us, that we are called, and actually are, his children. How exalted a dignity is this! We need not fear the scorn of the world, in which we are not known; for the world knoweth not him; this is a comfort to the sons of God.

Behold what wond'rous love
The Father hath bestowed
On sinners of a mortal race,
To call them sons of God.

DECEMBER IX.

Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. We know that we have passed from death unto life, &c. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, &c. And we have seen, and do testify, &c. 1 JOHN iii. 3, 14. iv. 12, 14.

SOME say, we trust all will be saved, but they deceive themselves; in order to profess a solid hope of salvation, we must cleanse ourselves from all sinful ways, particularly from worldly-mindness and uncharitableness; the world hates the true children of God, but we love them, and by this we know that we have passed from death unto life, and therefore have a certain hope of everlasting life, where all will be love. How then can he esteem himself a true child of God, and hope for eternal life, who, in writing or conversation, despise and ridicules the servants and children of God. But if we love one another, knowing the great love of God towards us, we shall become like him, as his children, and abide in him and he in us, and his love will be perfect in us. We may be perfectly assured of his love, and be confident, that we shall abide for ever in him, and live with him for ever; we know it from the Holy Spirit, which he hath given us, and which is our seal and pledge on the day of our redemption.

The saints on earth, and all the dead
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, their living head,
And of his grace partake.

DECEMBER X.

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood, &c. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life. 1 JOHN v. 6, 10, 11, 12.

JESUS came with water and blood, not with water alone, with his Holy Spirit, to sanctify us, but also with

blood, that he might first atone for us. We should therefore first of all patiently seek and obtain remission of sins in his blood; then may we hope to obtain the water of life, this Holy Ghost, for our inward purification and sanctification. And the Holy Spirit will bear witness within us, that the Spirit, or the law of the Spirit, the gospel, is truth: that God will fulfil his word, and as he hath promised us, will give us everlasting life. We have three witnesses of it in heaven, and three on earth. If we believe in Christ, we have this true testimony in ourselves, and may therefore assuredly know, that having the Son of God, we have life, eternal life; for he is, according to ver. 20. life eternal, and consequently, being in him, we are already entered into everlasting life.

Let all our tongues be one,
To praise our God on high;
Who from his bosom sent his Son,
To bring us strangers nigh.

My Saviour's pierced side,
Poured out a double flood;
By water we are purified,
And pardoned by the blood.

It cost him cries and tears
To bring us near to God;
Great was our debt, and he appears
To make our payment good.

DECEMBER XI.

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in truth. We therefore ought to receive such (*as are persecuted for the truth,*) that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth. 2 JOHN viii. 3. JOHN. iv. 8. See Heb. i. 3, 14.

WE ought to receive and assist one another, and take care that neither we nor others lose the good which we or they have wrought by our labours; for Jesus himself laboured for our souls, when he (Heb. i. 2.) "by himself purged our sins." What a noble and complete purification was this! We ourselves shall be his reward, and

he will take care not to lose us, who are the reward and prize given to him by his Father. He sits as our great king at the right hand of the Majesty on high, who will mightily protect us against all our enemies; and for this purpose he hath sent forth his angels, as, "ministering spirits" (ver. 14.) for our service, to protect us against the wicked enemy and lying spirit, that we may attain to salvation. We should therefore be fellow helpers one of another, and assist each other in the way to salvation.

We bow before thy face,
And sound thy glories high,
Hosanna to the God of grace
That lays his thunder by.

On earth thy mercy reigns,
And triumphs all above;
But, Lord, how weak are mortal strains
To sing immortal love?

DECEMBER XII.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, &c. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, &c. HEB. ii. 9, 14, 15.

JESUS did so humble himself for our sakes that it was necessary an angel should strengthen him. He tasted death for us all, and that by the grace of God. The grace and love of God moveth him to taste death for us all, none excepted; we may therefore, as many as believe in Christ, rest assured of the favour of God, and that we shall not taste death, Jesus having tasted it for us. He took upon him our flesh and blood, and by his death disarmed death and the devil, and delivered us not only from death itself, but also from the fear of it, that we might not all our life-time be slavishly afraid of death and hell. God hath already brought many sons unto glory; and he will lead us safely through the ways of death; for Jesus has the keys of death and hell.

Jesus, with all the saints above
My tongue would bear her part,
Would sound aloud thy saving love,
And sing thy bleeding heart.

Bless'd be the Lamb, my dearest Lord,
Who bought me with his blood,
And quench'd his Father's flaming sword
In his own vital flood.

DECEMBER XIII.

Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For we who have believed do enter into rest. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. HEB. iv. 1, 3, 9, 11.

O THAT none may come short of it! were the last affecting words of a pious prince on his death bed; and all Christian ministers and parents utter the same wish for their congregations and children. But if this be a proper prayer for the faithful, how can the impenitent go on so carelessly expecting eternal rest, whilst they walk in the broad way, which leads to everlasting pain and misery! If then we are walking in the strait way, Lord, grant that we may fear, lest we neglect any thing, lest any come short, or leave any thing undone, which may contribute to our peace. Strengthen and preserve us in the faith, that we may apply to ourselves the words, "We which have believed do enter into rest." Let our whole life, our thoughts and actions tend to it, and let us give all diligence, labouring, praying, and suffering, that we may arrive at it. Deliver us from our unbelief, that we may enter into rest with a perfect faith.

Israel, who saw God's works of grace,
Yet tempt their Maker to his face;
A faithless unbelieving brood,
That tired the patience of their God.

Look back, my soul, with holy dread,
And view these antient rebels dead;
Attend the offered grace to-day,
Nor lose the blessing by delay.

DECEMBER XIV.

Christ, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared, &c. HEB. v. 7, 8, 9.

JESUS offered up for us to God prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, and he was heard in our behalf, thereby making all our prayers an acceptable sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God, that we too may be heard. And though our prayer be very feeble, yet it is connected with the faithful earnest prayer of Christ on the mount of Olives, and on the cross, and with his intercession still continued. It ascends to God, and is to him an agreeable sound. Then will God certainly succour us; for Jesus hath already secured his aid, and we are in fact already assisted in our pursuit of his heavenly kingdom. But we must still suffer with him. If the Son of God learned obedience by the things which he suffered, we shall not be losers by our sufferings, but learn obedience, the obedience of faith. And if Jesus be the author and ground of our salvation, no suffering ought to weaken our faith, but to strengthen it, and forward our salvation.

Now let our pains be all forgot,
Our hearts no more repine;
Our sufferings are not worth a thought,
When, Lord, compared with thine.

DECEMBER XV.

God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, &c. HEB. vi. 17, 18, 19. See also chap. vii. 20, 21. *concerning the oath with which Christ entered upon his office.*

GOD knows how unbelieving we are, and therefore gives us not only many promises, but adds to them an oath. The oath which he sware unto Abraham concerns

us also, and as it implies all the other promises, they are all confirmed by an oath. He instituted Christ into his office of high priest by an oath, so that all his promises in Christ are yea, and amen, and upon oath; thus, that by two immutable things, by the promise and the oath, we have an exceeding strong consolation, and a sure and stedfast anchor of the soul, which will not permit us to suffer shipwreck on the sea of this world; and we are assured, that his counsel is unchangeable, and that whatever he hath promised us he will punctually perform; for as God cannot lie, neither can he break his oath.

The oath and promise of the Lord
Join to confirm his wondrous grace,
Eternal power performs the word,
And fills all heaven with endless praise.

DECEMBER XVI.

We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle. Christ being come, an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, &c. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, &c. Heb. viii. 1, 2. ix. 11, 12.

JESUS is our high priest, hence he is able (chap. vii. 25.) to save us, and maketh intercession for us. To save us and make intercession for us is his constant employment in heaven. He sitteth at the right hand of God, on the throne of majesty, as our Head and King, and will powerfully protect us his members against all our enemies; and being the ministers of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, he will abundantly communicate to us all the good things and gifts which he hath received for us, and take the best care of us. He is entered into the holy place and everlasting sanctuary, through the great and perfect tabernacle of his body, which was given up for us in death; and this not like the priests of old with strange blood, but with his own, which purchased eternal redemption. Thus (ver. 14.) he will

purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. So that his blood hath procured us forgiveness, peace of conscience, and power to serve God willingly.

Once in the circuit of a year
With blood, but not his own,
Aaron within the veil appears,
Before the golden throne.

But Christ, by his own powerful blood,
Ascends above the skies,
And, in the presence of our God,
Shews his own sacrifice.

DECEMBER XVII.

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, &c. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, &c. This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, &c. HEB. x. 12, 13, 14, 16, 17.

THE sacrifices under the Old Testament did not take away sin, so as to leave the mind perfectly at peace; there was every year a fresh remembrance of the sin, as having not yet been discharged. But by the sacrifice of Christ, which is eternally sufficient, all sins were perfectly atoned for at once, and so done away, that they are not only remitted to us who believe, but are no longer remembered. So that under the New Testament we need no longer be troubled in conscience about any sin, as not being discharged, and may therefore enjoy a quiet conscience. But in the same covenant it is the will of God to write his law in our hearts, or to give us a new heart, and a willing mind, that we need no longer be compelled, as they were under the Old Testament. All of us, great and small, are taught to know him. And if our enemies disturb and afflict our minds, or the church, we ought to wait, for Jesus still waits, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.

Jesus, in thee our eyes behold
A thousand glories more
Than the rich gems and polished gold
The sons of Aaron wore.

Fresh blood, as constant as the day,
Was on their altar spilt;
But thy one offering takes away
For ever all our guilt.

DECEMBER XVIII.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; let us draw near with a true heart, &c. Heb. x. 19, 20, 22.

Jesus our high priest being entered into the holiest by his blood, we have likewise the joy of entering into it, the veil, that is, his flesh, being done away on the cross. We may therefore enter, without fear, with entire joy, into the holiest in heaven, into the most intimate communion with God: this liberty and joy is that new and living way; the advantage of the new covenant in preference to the old, for in the latter there still subsisted much servile fear. We should therefore avail ourselves of this liberty, advance with a sincere heart, with true repentance, and a spirit without guile, without reserving one sin, and with a full assurance of faith, applying to ourselves Christ and all his merits, and living in faith, in his blood as in our element, and sprinkling ourselves with it, or purging ourselves from all our sins. This alone will deliver us from an evil conscience, whilst we seek peace of mind not in our own virtue, but in the blood of Christ, and daily through assisting grace cleanse ourselves with the pure water of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, the king of glory, reigns
On Sion's heavenly hill:
Looks like a lamb that has been slain,
And wears his priesthood still.

He ever lives to intercede
Before his Father's face:
Give him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace.

DECEMBER XIX.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, &c. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, &c. By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. HEB. xi. 6, 8, 9, 27.

FAITH is called, in ver. 1. "the evidence of things not seen." It is conversant with none but invisible things, promised in the word of God. By this faith alone we please God, as Enoch did, and Noah, when he received a command concerning that which he did not yet see, but believed, and was thereby justified. By the same faith Abraham went out, and knew not whither. He could not take a prospect of the land of promise, and when he was in it, he considered himself as a stranger; for he, together with all the faithful, looked for that invisible country in heaven. By the same faith Moses denied himself all the pleasures of sin, and all the treasures of Egypt, and chose in their stead distress and the reproach of Christ. Nor did he fear the king's wrath, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. In like manner we should adhere in faith to the invisible God and his word, though we see no help before us: by this means we shall please God, and be delivered from every trouble.

Faith is the brightest evidence
Of things beyond our sight;
Breaks through the clouds of flesh and sense,
And dwells in heavenly light.

DECEMBER XX.

Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, &c. But ye are come unto mount Sion, &c. HEB. xii. 18, 22, 23, 24.

HERE again we see, how much more excellent the new covenant is than the old. In the latter the Israelites came to the terrible fiery mount Sinai, inso-

much that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. But in the new covenant the faithful come to mount Sion, where no slavish fear of death or hell prevails; for they are admitted as citizens and inmates in the city of the living God, in the heavenly Jerusalem; they are, as it were, already entered into heaven together with Christ their head, and in the midst of many thousand angels will not judge them; being numbered among the spirits of just men made perfect, who cannot be judged. They are not with Moses, but with the Mediator of the new covenant; and his blood, with which they are sprinkled, speaketh for them better things than the blood of Abel. How great is this comfort!

Now we are come to Sion's hill,
The city of our God,
Where mildest words declare his will,
And spread his love abroad.

DECEMBER XXI.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, &c. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

God is a God of peace, for he reconciled us to himself by his Son, and made peace on the cross, so that all his thoughts concerning us are peace. He brought him again from the dead, that great shepherd of the sheep, after he had fully discharged our debt by his blood, and taken the guilt and punishment upon himself, that we might have peace. Jesus hath assigned and bequeathed to us the salvation he purchased with his blood, in his testament, which is eternally valid. We may now consider ourselves as universal heirs of our God and Saviour, and need no longer fear him with a slavish fear, he being the God of peace; nor need we complain of any want, or of the multitude of our enemies; for Jesus is our shepherd, who will give us a full

pasture, life and abundance; he will not suffer us to want any thing, and powerfully protect us against all our enemies. He will also make us perfect in every good work, to do his will, and he will work in us that which is well pleasing in his sight. So shall we have sufficient strength and power.

I love my shepherd's voice,
His watchful eyes shall keep
My wandering soul among
The thousands of his sheep:
He feeds his flock, he calls their names,
His bosom bears the tender lambs.

DECEMBER XXII.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, &c. Be patient, therefore, &c. Stablish your hearts. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, &c. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. JAMES i. 2, 3, 4, 12. v. 7, 8, 11. Rev. xiii. 10.

We need not therefore dread the temptations of the world, sin, and Satan, nor apprehend that our faith will be weakened or overcome by them. No, we are to consider temptation as matter of joy, as the strengthening of our faith, and persevere with patience unto the end. For faith and patience are always connected, and during this faithful patience, we shall have no want, but every kind of abundance, and after having been safely guarded through the temptation, we shall receive the crown of life. We should therefore look up to other patient bearers of the cross, such as Job, and more especially to Jesus himself, that in the midst of prevailing judgments we may be able to apply these words to ourselves: "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." The general path of Christian pilgrims is: Through suffering and patience, to glory.

How would the tempter boast aloud
If I became his prey,
Behold the sons of hell grow proud,
At thy so long delay.

But they shall fly at thy rebuke,
And Satan hide his head;
He knows the terrors of thy look,
And hears thy voice with dread.

DECEMBER XXIII.

If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, &c. and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, &c. Every good gift, and every perfect is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, &c. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, &c. JAMES i. 5, 6, 17. iii. 17.

BY nature, without the Spirit of truth, we are all destitute of true wisdom. He who hath not felt this want, nor prayed for the Holy Spirit and true wisdom, is not yet wise, however learned and however great a philosopher he may be. Many a young student imagines himself wise, and his head to be completely furnished, when he has not attained to the first step of wisdom here mentioned, *purity;* his heart is unsettled, quite desolate and void of spiritual gifts. Another is not peaceable and gentle, but is impatient of contradiction, contentious, and proud, and therefore is defective in the other steps towards wisdom. He hath not the wisdom from above, but that which is earthly, sensual, and even devilish. But he who perceives his want of wisdom, especially of a due knowledge of the love of God in Christ, which is the most excellent wisdom, must pray for it, and the Lord will most certainly give it him.

There's none can know the Father right
But those who learn him from the Son;
Nor can the Son be well received
But where the Father makes him known.

DECEMBER XXIV.

Be afflicted, and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the

sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. JAMES iv. 9, 10. *For penitent David says*, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. PSALM xxxviii. 6.

HAD David lived in our days, the scoffers and children of this world would have made a jest of this bowing of his head. But no man in his senses will bow his head out of hypocrisy, knowing how ready the world is to ridicule him. It were to be wished for thee, thou child of this world, that thou wert bowed down, since thou canst not without it be lifted up, nor saved. Some, that they may not pass for hypocrites, put on an affected joy. This is hypocrisy. But if thou art greatly bowed down, O penitent sinner, and mournest, adhere no longer to thy sins, but look up to the Lamb of God, who hath borne thy guilt, and reconciled thee to God; then shall the burthen of thy sins, if not immediately, yet at last, drop from thy conscience, and thou wilt be lifted up, and comforted, in proportion as thou hast been bowed down.

Oh, the sharp pangs of smarting pain
My dear Redeemer bore,
When knotty whips, and ragged thorns
His sacred body tore.

But knotty whips, and ragged thorns
In vain do I accuse;
In vain I blame the Roman bands,
And the more spiteful Jews.

'Twere you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.

DECEMBER XXV.

The prayer of faith shall save the sick. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves, &c. Now unto him that is able to keep you, &c. JAMES v. 15, 16. JUDE 20, 24.

THE faithful should pray fervently, both for those who are bodily and spiritually sick. They will infallibly be heard; for it is here written, "The prayer

of faith shall save the sick." Prayer is, in all cases, the best relief, and has great effect. Luther says, it is a great almighty thing. St. James refers us to the example of Elias. You see, says Luther, a single man praying, and prevailing by means of that prayer over the world, heaven, and earth, that God may suffer it to stand. How great is the power and influence of a true prayer; nothing is impossible to it; By prayer we may introduce ourselves and our friends into heaven, and supply every want, particularly the want of wisdom, and of a sense of the love of Christ, which is the highest wisdom. By prayer and the word we may mutually build up ourselves on our most holy faith, then the Lord will keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Amen, Hallelujah.

How sweet and awful is the place
With Christ within the doors,
While everlasting love displays
The choicest of her stores.

Pity the nations, O our God,
Constrain the earth to come;
Send thy victorious word abroad,
And bring the strangers home.

DECEMBER XXVI.

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, &c. Rev. i. 5, 6.

JOHN saw this Jesus, as he walked among the seven candlesticks, among the seven churches, and had in his right hand seven stars, which were the angels of the seven churches. And when John fell at his feet as dead, he said unto him, "Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive, and have the keys of hell and of death." All this is written for our comfort. Jesus, the true witness, will bear witness among us, in our hearts,

by his Spirit, of his counsel, and of his and his Father's love; for he hath promised it, therefore his faithfulness requires it. He hath loved us, and delivered up himself unto death for us. He hath washed us who believe, from all our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests before God his father. We therefore may go in and out before God as priests clothed in his holy garments, praying and blessing; and being kings we may subdue all our enemies, and at length even the fear of death. Hence he says unto us also, Fear not. He will shut up the gates of hell from us, and carry us safely through death.

Now to the Lamb, that once was slain,
Be endless blessings paid;
Salvation, glory, joy, remain
For ever on thy head.

DECEMBER XXVII.

I know thy works and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich, &c. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth, &c. Rev. ii. 9. iii. 15, 16, 17.

Jesus saith to all the seven bishops, "I know thy works." He knoweth all our works, good and evil, and particularly notices teachers, for he walks among the seven candlesticks, and his eyes are as a flame of fire. He knoweth the tribulation of the faithful, and will succour them. And if they be poor in spirit, he saith unto them, "thou art rich." For to the poor in spirit belongs the kingdom of heaven (Matth. v.) But the bishop of Laodicea imagining himself rich, Jesus said unto him, "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and knowest it not," which was the worst of all. But he advises him what to buy, and to anoint his eyes, that he might see. O that all they, who are rich in their own imagination, and yet lukewarm, more especially ministers, might earnestly pray for the eye-salve, mentioned in the 18th verse, that they may

see their poverty and misery; lest Jesus spew them out! but they who are wretched and know it not, and pray for repentance and grace, will not be thus rejected.

My guilt appeared but small before,
Till terribly I saw
How perfect, holy, just, and pure,
Was thine eternal law.

Then felt my soul the heavy load,
My sins revived again.
I had provoked a dreadful God;
And all my hopes were slain.

DECEMBER XXVIII.

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, &c. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent. Rev. ii. 1—5.

Jesus walketh even now in the midst of his churches, and sees all things with his eyes, which are as a flame of fire. He hath the stars, the teachers in his hands. Both teachers and hearers should be awakened by this, to walk in holy fear, and examine themselves narrowly. He saith of the bishop of Ephesus. I know thy works, thy labour and patience, thou hast laboured for my name's sake, and hast not fainted. Let every teacher and every Christian consider, and ask himself, Can Jesus say this of me? Do I labour indefatigably for his name's sake? Or do I seek my own glory or advantage in my labour? Have I not fainted? Or have I done all from motives of love, and not left my first love? We have all of us reason to be bowed down, and repent, and be very attentive, and do our utmost to overcome; for it is seven times repeated, "He that hath an ear, let him hear. He that overcometh," &c.

We sing the glories of thy love,
We sound the dreadful name;
The Christian church unites the songs
Of Moses and the Lamb.

of God's omniscience, and in that of our own consciences. These books will be opened, and we shall be judged according to their contents. We should therefore examine and judge our conduct, not by our own judgment or that of other men, but by the holy scripture; for every man shall be judged according to his works. How will the careless sinner pass before this judgment with his wicked life? O my Saviour, grant that we may thoroughly examine and judge ourselves, and fly from the judgment-seat, to the mercy-seat, and be ever found penitent, faithful, and ready, that this last evening of the year, and the last evening of our lives may both be happily ended, and we may appear with joy before thy judgment.

The Lord, the judge, before his throne
Bids the whole earth draw nigh,
The nations near the rising sun,
And near the western sky.

Heaven from above his call shall hear,
Attending angels come,
And earth and hell shall know and fear
His justice and their doom.

FEBRUARY XXIX. IN LEAP YEAR

And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, &c. Now is come salvation, and strength, &c.; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, &c. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, &c. Rev. xi. 15. xii. 10, 11. See also chap. x. 7. In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants, the prophets.

This is the mystery, that the kingdoms are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and that is fulfilled which is written in Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44, 45. The accuser shall be farther rejected, and be overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the testimony of truth whilst many seal this testimony with their blood. In the opinion of many orthodox divines, this promise shall

Holy Ghost is called a spirit of grace and of prayer, which shall be poured out upon us, if we look up to Jesus on the cross. Jesus merited for us this spirit of prayer, and hath already received for us that and all other gifts. To him, the true angel of the covenant, much incense is given, that he should offer it up with the prayer of all saints. Would we pray fervently, and have our prayer ascend directly as the smoke of a grateful incense to God, we must fetch fire from the altar, that is, look up to Jesus, as sacrificed for us on the altar of the cross, and not pray in any other than in his name. We must, moreover, sanctify ourselves; for the prayer of saints is here mentioned twice. The angel cast the fire into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake; thus the prayer of saints is succeeded by great judgments on the followers of antichrist. What judgments of earthquakes, war, and other distress have not we experienced! Lord, grant that we may patiently consider the signs of the times, and thy word, and have recourse to fervent prayer!

My Advocate appears
For my defence on high;
The Father bows his ears,
And lays his thunder by.
Not all that hell or sin can say,
Shall turn his heart, his love away.

DECEMBER XXXI.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Rev. xx. 12, 13.

This evening concludes one year more. How soon will the last evening of life appear, and place us before the judgment-seat! O that we could examine ourselves this evening, how we shall stand before that judgment. How have we spent this year, and our whole life? All our thoughts, words, and actions are written in the book

A TABLE OF THE TEXTS

Illustrated in this Work.

	Page
GEN. i. 3. 2 COR. iv, 6. -	13
vi. 3, 5, 9. - -	14
vi. 12. Mat. xxiv. 21, 39.	ib.
viii. 1. - - -	15
xv. 1. xxvi. 24. -	16
xviii. 17, 19. - -	17
xxii. 8, 14. - -	ib.
xxxix. 9, 10, 23. -	18
xlvii. 12. 1, 21. -	19
xlix. 18. - - -	20
EXOD. i. 12. ii. 22, 25. -	21
xii. 10, 11, 13. - -	22
xiv. 13, 14, 15. - -	23
xxiii. 22, 25, 27. -	24
LEVIT. xvi. 30, 51. xvii. 11.	ib.
vi. 9, 12. - - -	25
xix. 17. - - -	26
NUMBERS ix. 18, 19. -	27
DEUT. vi. 4---7. - -	28
vii. 6, 9, 10. - -	29
viii. 10, 14, 18. ix. 6.	30
x. 12, 16. xi. 8. - -	ib.
xv. 10, 11. xvi. 19. -	31
xviii. 15, 16. - -	32
xxx. 6, 14, 15, 19. -	33
xxxi. 3, 6. - -	34
xxxii. 3, 4, 5, 6. -	35
xxxii. 9, 10, 11, 12. -	36
xxxii. 29, 36, 46, 47.	ib.
xxxiii. 3, 29. - -	37
JOSHUA xi. 15. xxi. 44, 55.	38
xxiii. 3, 11, 12, 13, 14.	39
xxiv. 15, 16, 24. -	ib.
JUDGES ii. 10, 14, 15. -	40
xv. 16, 18, 19. - -	41
RUTH i. 16, 17. iii. 5, 11. -	42
1 SAM. ii. 2, 6, 9. - -	43
iii. 1, 19, 20, 22. -	44
iv. 22. - - -	45
xii. 20, 21, 22. - -	46
xv. 17, 19, 23. - -	47
xvii. 32, 36, 37, 45. -	48
xxv. 29. - - -	ib.
2 SAM. vii. 27, 28, 29. -	49
xxii. 2, 3, 7, 29, 30, 31.	50

	Page
1 KINGS viii. 23, 24, 29. -	51
xi. 1, 4. - - -	52
xviii. 21, 38, 40, 41. -	53
xix. 11, 12. - -	54
2 KINGS iv. 3, 6, 43. -	55
v. 25, 26, 27. - -	56
vi. 16, 17. - - -	57
1 CHRON. iv. 10. v. 20. -	58
xxviii. 9. - - -	ib.
xxix. 10, 11, 12, 13. -	59
2 CHRON. xiv. 11. xx. 12, 17.	60
xv. 2, 7, 15. xvi. 9. -	61
xx. 20. - - -	62
xxvi. 5, 15, 16. - -	63
xxxiii. 12, 13, 15. -	ib.
xxxiv. 3, 31. - -	64
EZRA v. 5. viii. 22, 23, 31.	65
NEHEM. i. 7. 8, 11. - -	66
ESTHER iv. 14. - -	ib.
JOB i. 21, ii. 10. - -	67
v. 19. x. 12, 13. -	6
xxxiii. 15, 16, 17, 29, 30.	68
PSALM ii. 12. - - -	9
vi. 10, ix. 10, 11, 19. -	70
x. 14. xi. 1. xii. 2, 6. -	71
xxvii. 1, 5, 13, 14. -	72
xxxi. 1, 2, 5, 19, 20. -	ib.
xxxiv. 4, 6, 7, 15, 19.	73
xxxvii. 7, 8, 9. - -	74
xxxix. 6, 7, 8, 12. -	75
xlv. 3, 4, 5, xlvi. 1, 11.	ib.
xlviii. 3, 14, 1. 15, 22.	76
lii. 7, 8. liv. 2, 3. lv. 17.	77
lvi. 4, 9. lvii. 1. lix. 9.	78
lxv. 2, 3. lxvi. 18. -	ib.
lxxiv. 12. lxxv. 7. -	79
lxxx. 7, 17. lxxxi. 12.	80
lxxxiv. 11, 12. -	81
lxxxix. 2, 15, 16, 17.	82
xcii. 12---15. xciv. 15.	83
cii. 2, 13, 14, 15, 28. -	ib.
cvi. 13, 14, 15, 44, 45.	84
cx. 3. cxi. 6, 7. -	85
cxv. 3. cxvi. 16. -	87
cxix. 9, 18, 29, 30, 33.	ib.

	Page
Psal. cxix. 45, 52, 59, 60.	88
cxix. 56, 57, 72, 103. -	89
cxix. 67, 71, 75, 88. -	90
cxix. 104, 105, 132. -	91
cxix. 145, 165, 168. -	92
cxxi. 1, 2, 3. cxxv. 2.	ib.
cxlvi. 5, 6. cxlviii. 12.	93
Prov. i. 5, 7. ii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 10.	94
iii. 17, 18, 21, 22, 23. -	95
vi. 6---11. xxi. 25. -	96
viii. 1, 14, 15, 20, 21.	ib.
ix. 1---6. - - -	97
x. 9, 24, 28, 29, 30. -	98
xi. 4, 8, 18, 24, 28, 31	99
xii. 9, 11, 21. xiii. 7. -	100
xiii. 20. xiv. 6, 9, 12. -	101
xiv. 26, 27, 32. -	ib.
xv. 16, 25, 27, 29, 33.	102
xvi. 1, 2, 3, 7. -	103
xvi. 5, 18, 19, 32. -	104
xviii. 10, 17. xix. 11. -	105
xxi. 2, 29, 30, 31. -	106
xxii. 3, 4. xxiii. 17, 18.	107
xxiv. 14, 23, 29, xxv. 21.	108
xxviii. 25. xxix. 23. -	ib.
xxviii. 8, 21, 22, 27. -	109
xxviii. 2. Eccl. x. 8. -	110
xxviii. 25, 26. xxx. 5.	111
Eccles. v. 10---13. -	112
vii. 2, 3, 4. ii. 2. -	113
vii. 8, 9. ix. 10. - -	114
viii. 11---14. - -	115
ix. 13---18. x. 3. -	116
x. 16, 17. xi. 9. -	117
Song ii. 4, 5. iv. 16. v. 1. -	ib.
iii. 6. iv. 4. vi. 10. -	118
iv. 1, 7. vi. 4. - -	119
viii. 5, 6, 7. - -	120
Isaiah i. 5---7. 11---18. -	121
ii. 2, 3, 11, 12. - -	122
v. 11, 12, 14. - -	123
vi. 3. - -	124
ix. 12, 13, 16. - -	125
xi. 1, 2, 9. - -	126
xii. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6. -	127
xxv. 6, 7, 8, 9. -	ib.
xxvi 9 10, 12, 16. -	128

	Page
Isa. xxviii. 15. xxix. 15. -	129
xxviii. 16, 18, 19. -	130
xxx. 18, 19. xxxi. 5. -	131
xxxviii. 15, 17. - -	132
xl. 1, 2, 3. - -	133
xli. 14---18. - -	134
xlii. 3, 6, 7, 16. - -	135
xliii. 4, 5, 13, 16, 19. -	136
xliv. 2, 3, 4, 5. - -	ib.
xlv. 6, 7, 8, 22. - -	137
xlvi. 8. xlviii. 8, 9, 10.	138
xlix. 13, 17, 23. -	139
l. 10. li. 6, 12, 16. -	140
liii. 6, 11, 12. - -	141
lviii. 2. lix. 1, 2. -	142
lxii. 6, 7. - - -	ib.
lxv. 13, 23. lxvi. 2. -	143
Jer. ii. 19, 33, 35. iii. 12, 13.	144
iii. 14. iv. 1, 4, 14. -	145
v. 1. - - -	146
v. 3, 12. vi. 18, 14. -	147
ix. 23, 24. - -	148
x. 6, 7, 23. - -	149
xiii. 22. xiv. 7, 9, 19, 20.	150
xv, 19, 20. - -	ib.
xvi. 5, 12, 17. xvii. 1. -	151
xvii. 5, 7, 8. - -	152
xxii. 13. - -	ib.
xxiv. 7. - - -	153
xxxi. 33, 34. - -	154
xxxii. 39, 40, 41. -	155
xxxviii. 4. xliv. 10. -	156
Lamenta. iii. 37---42. -	ib.
Ezek. ii. 6. iii. 17, 18. -	157
viii. 3, 12, 13, 18. -	158
xii. 22, 23, 25. -	159
xvi. 6, 9, 10, 14, 15. -	ib.
xvi. 49, 50, 60, 61, 63.	160
xviii. 20, 21, 24, 31, 32.	161
xx. 18, 19, 21, 25. -	162
xxiv. 12, 14. xxviii. 3.	163
xxxiv. 2, 4, 10, 13. -	ib.
xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. -	164
Daniel ii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.	165
iv. 17, 34. - -	166
ix. 8, 9, 13, 18, 19. -	167
xii. 2, 3, 10. -	168

	Page
Hosea v. 15. vi. 1, 2. -	ib.
vii. 14, 16. viii. 3, 12. -	169
xi. 7, 8, 9. - -	170
xii. 6, 8. xiii. 9, 12. -	171
xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. - -	172
Joel ii. 13, 14. - -	173
Amos v. 14, 15, 21, 28. -	174
viii. 11. ix. 8, 9. -	175
Obad. 3, 4, 7. - - -	176
Jonah ii. 2, 3, 7. - -	177
iii. 10. - - - -	ib.
Micah v. 4, 9. vii. 11. -	178
vi. 8. vii. 2, 4. - -	179
Nahum i. 3, 7, 8. - -	180
Habakkuk i. 12. ii. 4. -	181
Zeph. i. 12. ii. 3. - -	182
Haggai i. 12, 13. ii. 4, 5, 7.	183
Zech. ii. 5, 8, 10. - -	184
iii. 7, 8, 9. vi. 12. -	ib.
iv. 6, 7, 10. - -	185
ix. 8, 17. x. 12. - -	186
xii. 8, 10. xiii. 1. xiv. 9.	187
Malachi ii. 7. iii. 3. -	188
iii. 16, 17, 18. - -	189
Judith ix. 5, 11, 12, 14. -	190
Wisdom i. 3, 6. 10, 11. -	191
ii. 11, 12, 15, 16. -	192
v. 1—9. - - -	193
vii. 30. ix. 4, 10, 17.	ib.
xi. 20, 23, 24, 26. -	194
xii. 15, 18, 20, 21. -	195
xv. 1, 2, 3. - -	196
Tobit iii. 1, 2, 5, 14, 15. -	197
iv. 5, 7, 15, 19, 20. -	198
xiii. 5, 6. - - - -	ib.
Eccles. ii. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11.	200
iii. 18, 20, 21, 24, 26.	ib.
iv. 14, 15, 17, 18, 26.	201
v. 4, 7. vii. 15. -	202
xiv. 22. xv. 6—10. -	203
xvii. 29. xxiii. 14, 21.	204
xix. 24. xxi. 11. -	205
xxxii. 14, 15, 17. -	206
xxxii. 24. xxiv. 10.	ib.
xxxv. 15, 16, 17. -	207
li. 13, 14. 19, 20. -	208
Barech iii. 10, 12, 13. iv. 20.	209

	Page
1 Maccab. ii. 61. iii. 18, 19.	210
2 Maccab. iv. 17. vi. 15. -	ib.
Matthew i. 23. - -	211
iii. 2, 7, 8, 9, 10. -	212
iv. 17. - - -	213
v. 4. - - -	214
v. 6. - - -	215
v. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10. -	ib.
v. 13, 14, 16. - -	216
v. 20. vii. 15, 21 -	217
vii. 11, 12. - -	ib.
x. 22, 29. xi. 12. -	218
xv. 8, 9, 19. xvi. 6. -	219
xvi. 18. - -	220
xviii. 3, 7, 8, - -	221
xviii. 19. xxi. 22. -	222
xxiv. 39. xxv. 10. -	223
xxv. 32, 33, 34. -	224
Mark iv. 24, 25. - -	ib.
ix. 23. xi. 22, 23, 24. -	225
xiv. 33, 34, 36. xv. 34.	226
Luke ii. 10, 11. - -	227
vi. 22, 23, 26. - -	228
x. 2. - - - -	229
xv. 17—22. - -	230
xviii. 1. - - -	231
xxii. 44. xxiii. 34, 43.	232
xxiv. 34, 36. - -	ib.
John iii. 14, 15, 36. - -	233
iv. 10, 84. - - -	234
v. 6, 14. - - -	235
v. 44. vi. 29, 44. -	236
vi. 47, 48, 51, 54, 56. -	237
vii. 17, 47, 48, 49. -	ib.
xi. 25, 26, 39, 40. -	238
xii. 26. Luke ix. 23.	239
xii. 35, 46, 47, 48. -	240
xiii. 10, 15. xv. 3. -	241
xiv. 13, 14. xv. 24. -	242
xvi. 33. xvi. 15, 16, 26.	243
xix. 18, 26, 27, 30. -	ib.
xx. 15, 16, 17. - -	244
xx. 27, 28, 29. - -	245
xxi. 17, 18, 19. - -	246
Acts ii. 36, 37, 38. - -	247
iii. 19. iv. 12. - -	ib.
ix. 11. x. 2, 4. - -	248

	Page
Acts xii. 5, 10, 12. - -	249
xvii. 30, 31. - -	250
xx. 21, 26, 28. - -	251
xx. 29, 30, 31, 33. -	ib.
xxiv. 16. xxvi. 22. -	252
xxvi. 17. 18. - -	253
Rom. i. 16. ii. 4, 28. -	254
iii. 12, 27, 28. iv. 7, 8.	255
iv. 17---22. - -	ib.
v. 3, 4, 5. - - -	256
vi. 3, 4. - - -	257
vii. 4. viii. 12. - -	258
viii. 15, 16, 26. - -	ib.
x. 3, 10, 11. xi. 32. -	259
xii. 10, 11, 14, 16, 18.	260
xiv. 1, 7, 8, 12, 16, 17.	261
xv. 4, 5, 13. - -	262
1 Cor. i. 9, 7, 8. - -	ib.
ii. 14. iii. 19. iv. 10, 13.	263
v. 7. vi. 12, 19. vii. 29.	264
ix. 26, 27. x. 6, 7. -	265
x. 32, 33. xi. 1. -	266
xi. 30, 31, 32. - -	ib.
xii. 3, 4, 31. - -	267
xv. 25, 58. xvi. 13. -	268
2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 10. - -	269
ii. 14. iii. 4, 5. iv. 8, 9.	270
v. 5, 6, 7, 17. vi. 11. -	ib.
vii. 9, 10. - - -	271
viii. 9, 14. ix. 6, 7. -	272
xi. 2, 3. - - -	273
xii. 9, 10. xiii. 11. -	274
Gala. ii. 19. iii. 24, 26, 27, 28.	275
v. 18. 23. vi. 15, 16.	ib.
Eph. i. 16, 18. - - -	276
iii. 14---21. - -	277
iv. 15, 16. v. 1, 2. -	278
v. 30. - - - -	279
vi. 8, 11---18. - -	280
Phil. i. 21. iii. 7---10. -	281
i. 27. ii. 15. iii. 18. -	ib.
Colo. i. 12, 27. ii. 6, 7, 8. -	282
iii. 15. Eph. v. 20. -	283
1 Thess. i 3, 4. - - -	284

	Page
1 Thess v. 8. 2 Thess. i. 11.	285
2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. iii. 3, 5.	ib.
1 Tim. i. 5, 6, 7, 18, 19. -	286
iii. 16. iv. 7, 8, 9. -	287
vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 Tim. iii. 1.	288
vi. 6---12. - - -	ib.
2 Tim. i. 12, 13. 1 Tim. vi. 12.	289
iii. 15, 16, 17. iv. 2, 3.	290
iv. 7, 8, 18. - -	291
Titus i. 16. ii. 1, 7, 8. -	292
iii. 1---8 - -	293
iii. 14. Philem. 4, 7.	ib.
1 Peter i. 3, 4, 5. - -	294
ii. 9, 15, 20, 21. -	295
iii. 14, 15, 16. iv. 4. -	296
iv. 12, 13, 16, 17, 18.	297
v. 8, 10. - - -	ib
2 Peter i. 5, 6, 7. - -	298
ii. 9. iii. 9—12. -	299
1 John i. 9. ii. 28. iii. 1. -	300
iii. 3, 14. iv. 12, 14.	301
v. 6, 10, 11, 12. -	ib.
2 John i, 3. John iv. 8. -	302
Heb. ii. 9, 14, 15. - -	303
iv. 1, 3, 9, 11. - -	304
v. 7, 8, 9. - - -	305
vi. 17, 18, 19. - -	ib.
viii. 1, 2. ix. 11, 12. -	306
x. 12, 13, 14, 16, 17. -	307
x. 19, 20, 22. - -	308
xi. 6, 8, 9, 27. - -	309
xii. 18, 22, 23, 34. -	ib.
xiii. 20, 21. - -	310
James i. 2, 3, 4, 12. v. 7, 8.	311
i. 5, 6, 17. iii. 17. -	312
iv. 9, 10. - - -	313
v. 15, 16. Jude 20, 24.	ib.
Rev. i. 5, 6. - - -	314
ii. 9. iii. 15, 16, 17. -	315
ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. - -	316
vi. 15, 16. vii. 3. ix. 4	317
viii. 3, 4, 5. - -	ib.
xx. 12, 13. - -	318
xi. 15. xii. 10, 11. -	319

Stereotyped by J. M. Morris and Co. Bungay.